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Let Me Serve Your Majesty: Psalm 8

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ABSTRACT

The speaker in Ps 8 proclaims a desire to serve Yahweh's heavenly power/victory by appealing to humanity's status as God's images (Gen 1:27) and accepting the role of Yahweh's new servant (Isa 55:3), as a priest/minister of God (Isa 61:1-6; cf Isa 42:1). This thesis translates אשר תנה as one word in verse 2b (אשרתנה), rendered, "May I serve your heavenly power/victory!" This is illustrated (in part) by the only two participles in Ps 8, ינקם (v. 3) and עבר (v. 9), which refer to cosmic foes of Yahweh—"the ones who nurse" (the goodly gods in *CAT I.23*) and the "one who crosses" the seas (Leviathan). This bold/cosmic proclamation is mitigated by the eschatological vision of humanity's reign in the verbal chiasm of verses 6-7 and the list of creatures in ascending uncontrollability in verses 8-9. Psalm 8's use of ancient Near Eastern image-of-god ideology vis-à-vis Genesis 1 supports these claims. The way in which Genesis adapts image-of-god ideology is analogous to the way in which the role of Yahweh's ideal king is transferred to Israel as a whole in Deutero-Isaiah. The ethical stipulations of Yahweh's servant/ideal king for acting as God's mediator help explain why Trito-Isaiah and Ps 8 sought to accept the role of Yahweh's servant in the context of the priesthood. The notion that the cultic actions of the priest in the holy place have cosmic implications helps ground Ps 8's bold proclamation to serve Yahweh's heavenly power/victory in everyday life. The author expressed this desire to serve through a mythological worldview in which

humans participate in Yahweh's ongoing battle and certain now-but-not-yet victory
against cosmic foes.

“Let Me Serve Your Majesty: Psalm 8”

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The Faculty of The Graduate School of Theology

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In Partial Fulfillment

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Master of Arts in Old Testament

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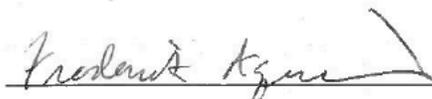
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INTRODUCTION

The speaker in Ps 8 proclaims a desire to serve Yahweh's heavenly power/victory by appealing to humanity's status as God's images (Gen 1:27) and accepting the role of Yahweh's new servant (Isa 55:3) as a priest/minster of God (Isa 61:1-6; cf. Isa 42:1). Psalm 8 combines theologies also found in Genesis 1 and the Isaiah servant tradition—with special attention to the role of Yahweh's people as the recipients of the royal mandate (e.g., Isa 55:3)—to inspire Israel to action during times of hardship. Similar to Genesis 1, Ps 8 reminded Israel of their origin in Yahweh as God's images and added to it another theologically similar idea that the Davidic mandate had been applied to Israel as a whole. Together, these traditions would have reminded Israel of their true identity and proper beginning as Yahweh's people in order to orient them to their proper end as a light to the nations (Isa 49:5-7; cf. Gen 12:1-3), a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation (e.g., Exod 19:6). I will argue for this thesis by addressing the following in three chapters.

In chapter 1, I will defend my translation of Ps 8. It seems that few commentators have yet to seriously entertain Dahood's proposal to resolve the MT's corrupt text Ps 8:2b without emendation by moving אשר תנה (“which to put”) together to form one word—the first person cohortative אשרתנה (“may I serve”). In part, this thesis provides an interpretation of Ps 8 that supports this reading. This reading may also offer additional

insight to the unparalleled imagery of Ps 8:3a, מפי עללים וינקים יסדת עז, commonly understood as a reference to literal nursing babies.¹

In chapter 2, I will first illustrate the ancient Near Eastern ideology in which the king was considered the image and representative of the deity. Second, I will show how both Genesis and Ps 8 appear to be adapting this ideology by applying it to all of humanity in relationship to Yahweh. Third, I will illustrate how the Old Testament sometimes depicts Israelite kings with the potential to function as representatives and mediators of Yahweh, similar to the image-of-god ideology in the ancient Near East. Fourth, I will illustrate the priestly view of kingship, in which the ability of the king to represent and mediate Yahweh depends on the king's ethical standing. Fifth, I will show how the imagined role of Yahweh's ideal king was transferred to Israel as a whole,² similar to the way Gen 1 and Ps 8 applied the image of god to all of humanity. Last, I will summarize how Ps 8 adapted ancient Near Eastern image-of-god ideology in relationship to ideal Israelite royal ideology and sublimated these concepts to a priestly understanding of serving Yahweh, as his newly anointed servants. This summary will lead us to chapter 3 and the practical outworking of Ps 8's desire to serve Yahweh's heavenly power/victory in relationship to Isa 42, 51, 55, 56, and 60-62 and a particular facet of Isaiah servant theology.

1. Mark Smith, "Ps 8:2b-3: New Proposals for Old Problems," *CBQ* 59 (1997): 637-41. In this article, Smith proposed that instead of literal nursing babes, the text is a reference to the so-called goodly gods of the Ugaritic *CAT 1.23*, who nurse at the breast of Athirat. I will make use of this parallel in the thesis.

2. Psalm 8 is not the only text to do this. Isaiah 55:3-5 applies the promises on offer to David to the people as whole, and other texts make similar claims (although perhaps less obvious), using so-called democratizing kingship language. Joachim Becker has argued that some royal psalms, Micah, and Zechariah participate in this tradition. Joachim Becker, *Messianic Expectation in the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 68-78.

In chapter 3, I will argue that Ps 8 was used to inspire Israel to live into their roles as Yahweh's servants/mediators during times of hardship, perhaps when the hope of an ideal king ushering in the just and peaceful reign of Yahweh was out of reach.³ This servant role could be similar to the servant tradition in Isaiah, in which the promises on offer to David and his descendants were reappropriated and applied to the people as a whole.⁴ In this chapter, I will illustrate an interpretation of Yahweh's servant(s) theology in Isa 40-66 that could explain why the author of Ps 8 requested to serve Yahweh's heavenly power/victory. In order to do this, I will focus on particular texts that share commonalities with Ps 8: (1) There are shared motifs and vocabulary between Isa 42, 51-52, 55, 56, and 60-62 that help explain the theology of Ps 8. (2) Further comparisons

3. One of the difficulties with this proposal is that it places the text in a period much later than the Ugaritic material. For the time being, I am suggesting that while the initial composition of the text involved a relationship with the Ugaritic goodly gods, future liturgical appropriations of the texts were likely tied to later time periods.

4. This is related to what some have called the Zion tradition. The so-called "Zion Tradition" has three major themes. Yahweh's anointed king is to come from the line of David; Jerusalem is Yahweh's chosen city and dwelling place; the nations will stream to Zion to pay tribute to Yahweh and his king. J. J. M. Roberts dates this tradition's origins as early as the tenth century. While many scholars find this early dating dubious, the precise origin and dating of the tradition are not of major concern to my thesis. Mark Hamilton puts it nicely, writing about the Deuteronomistic History, that "although scholars debate the date, extent, and nature of these sources and the degree to which the Deuteronomists reworked them, it seems clear that the book as we have it is the result of several stages of literary growth, some of which are more or less recognizable, even if their dates are highly controverted and perhaps unknowable." Mark Hamilton, *A Kingdom for a Stage: Political and Theological Reflection in the Hebrew Bible*, Forschungen zum Alten Testament 116 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018), 51. It may suffice to say that the Zion tradition in its early forms clung to the hope of an ideal Davidide in the formulation of the three premises stated above. It appears that this early form of the tradition was challenged at various points in Israel's history, as Yahweh's people experienced hardships, such as exile, or the lack of prosperity under kings that turned out to be less than ideal. Under such hardships, it appeared that Yahweh might break from the so-called Zion Tradition and its promise to the Davidic line. In some texts, it appears that the promises on offer to David and his descendants were shifted to fit Israel as a whole. In this thesis, I will argue that Ps 8 is one instance in which the psalmist broke with the early tenets of the Zion tradition and reappropriated it in order to provide encouragement and hope to Israel in times of hardship. This reappropriation is referred to by some as the "democratization" of the Zion tradition. To say that the tradition was democratized is of course anachronistic, but for lack of a better term, I may use "democratized" in the thesis to refer to this reappropriation of the tradition, in which the promises on offer to a specific family (the line of David) were made available to Israel as a whole.

between Ps 8 and Isa 60-62 help illustrate Ps 8's relationship to this Isaiah servant theology and the Ps 8's desire to serve (שרת) Yahweh.

The author of Ps 8 was operating with similar servant theology found in Trito-Isaiah. However, it is difficult to discuss the servant theology of Isa 56-66 without referencing Isa 40-55 because several of the themes from chapters 40-55 are carried over into chapters 56-66 (and in some cases, perhaps the other way around).⁵ I will argue that Ps 8 was composed not simply with reference to the “democratization” of the Davidic mandate, or even to Isa 40-55, but in light of the servant theology in Trito-Isaiah that extends and develops certain themes of Isa 40-55.⁶ Exploring the connections between these texts will shed more light on Ps 8's vision for serving Yahweh in relationship to cosmic foes and matters related to ethical standards for mediating Yahweh.

I do not propose that the texts influenced one another directly. Rather, I suggest that these texts function similarly. While one could argue that Isa 56-66 is postexilic, doing the same for Ps 8 may prove difficult, even dubious. Therefore, I suggest that given the similar themes shared between Ps 8 and these Isaiah texts, Ps 8 functioned in a similar context during times of hardship.

5. Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, “Continuity and Discontinuity in Isaiah 40-66: History of Research,” Pages 13-40 in *Continuity and Discontinuity: Chronological and Thematic Development in Isaiah 40-66*, *Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des und Neuen Testament*. 255 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014). The other articles in this volume are also instructive.

6. I am adapting this methodology from Michael A. Lyons, “Psalm 22 and the ‘Servants’ of Isaiah 54; 56-66,” *CBC* 77 (2015): 647.

CHAPTER I

TRANSLATION

In this chapter, I will present my translation of Ps 8 and introduce my understanding of the text. I will address its translation in four sections. First, I will propose a way to resolve the translation of אשר תנה (literally “which to put”) in Ps 8:2b. Second, I will show how this new understanding might shed light on the peculiar reference to babes and infants in verse 3a. Third, I will discuss my translation of the varying verb forms in verses 6-7 (*waw*-consecutive-imperfect, imperfect [v. 6], and imperfect, perfect [v. 7]). Fourth, I will explore the meaning of the sequential intensification of the uncontrollability of animals in verses 8-9, with a reference to Leviathan in verse 9.

Section 1 will address Ps 8:2b. Psalm 8:2b is the most difficult verse to understand in the psalm. I will argue that אשר תנה should be read as one word (first person cohortative of שרה with the energetic ending), forming the translation of “May I serve.”¹ This is a peculiar use of שרה in the Old Testament that requires close examination. Therefore, before explaining my translation choice to follow Dahood, I will go into some

1. Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms 1: 1-50*. AB 16 (New York: Doubleday, 1966), 49. Dahood translates אשרתנה as “I will adore.”

detail about the use of שרת in the Old Testament and how I think its overall usage affects my understanding of the word, as I read it in Ps 8.

After I establish the basic meaning of שרת in the text, I will examine the word הוד in order to understand what it would mean to say, “May I serve על־השמים.” Once I have established the meaning of שרת and הוד in the text, I will examine the final phrase of Ps 8:2b, על־השמים. Understanding the entire half verse of Ps 8:2b, אשרתנה הודך על־השמים, within the context of the Psalm requires more explanation than will fit within a chapter on its translation. Therefore, chapters 2 and 3 will provide additional commentary and further explanation for the understanding of this translation. The same is true of parts 2, 3, and 4 of this chapter (v. 3, vv. 4-7, and vv. 8-9, respectively).

In section 2, I will discuss the difficult imagery of nursing infants in verse 3. This feature of the Psalm, like verse 2b, is not easy to understand. At first glance it appears that even babies will praise Yahweh, but this peculiar (and unparalleled) image seems out of place in relationship to the rest of the verse, which tells of Yahweh’s dealing with enemies. I will suggest that the imagery of babes and infants in verse 3 is a parallel to the goodly gods in the Ugaritic text *CAT 1.23*.² These goodly gods are depicted as ravenous newborn deities, who pose a threat to the created order. I will argue that Ps 8 utilized this mytheme in verse 3a to illustrate the type of enemy that Yahweh subdues in verse 3b.³ Like the use of הוד and שרת in verse 2b, parallels for nursing babes and infants imagery are not common in the Old Testament (esp. *CAT 1.23*).

2. Smith, “Ps 8:2b-3: New Proposals for Old Problems.”

3. The goodly gods are not described as enemies of Yahweh in *CAT 1.23*, but I will argue that the threat they pose to creation in the Ugaritic text suggests that the author of Ps 8 could have considered them as cosmic foes of Yahweh and enemies of Yahweh’s created order.

In section 3, I will discuss verses 6-7 and the varying verb forms. I will argue that the author intended a verbal chiasm to illustrate the “now-but-not-yet” nature of Yahweh’s and humanity’s victory over cosmic foes. The four verbs form a chiasm and appear in order as *waw*-consecutive-imperfect, imperfect [v. 6], and imperfect, perfect [v. 7]). With the imperfect verbs, signaling incomplete action, carrying the force of the chiasm, the verses cohere with the psalmist’s request to serve Yahweh in verse 2b.

In section 4, I will address the list of animals in verses 8-9 and how it, like verses 6-7, point to the psalmist’s desire to serve Yahweh. The ascending uncontrollability of the creatures points to Leviathan in verse 9. This reference to Leviathan, listed in the creatures “under the feet” of humanity, coheres with the psalmist’s request to serve Yahweh על־יהשמים when we consider Leviathan as one of Yahweh’s cosmic foes. My arguments for the meaning of שרת and הוד in verse 2b (section 1 of this chapter) help support this reading as well and coheres with the chiastic structure of the psalm as a whole.

Before I begin, see my translation of Ps 8 below. Unless noted otherwise, other translations from the Old Testament will appear from the NRSV.

- 1) Yahweh our Lord,
How majestic is your name over all the earth!
- 2) May I serve your heavenly power/victory!
- 3) Away from the mouths of nursing babes,
you have established a stronghold because of your harassers,
to stop the foe and the avenger.
- 4) For I see your heavens, the works of your fingers,
moon and stars, which you affixed.
- 5) What is humankind that you remember it,
or a son of humanity that you appointed him,

- 6) that you made them⁴ a little less than God?
 And you will crown them with glory and majesty!
- 7) You will make them rule over the works of your hands;
 you put everything underneath their feet,
- 8) Sheep and cattle, all of them,
 even the beasts of the field,
- 9) birds of the air and fish of the sea
 the one who crosses the paths of the seas
- 10) Yahweh our Lord
 How majestic is your name over all the earth!

Section 1: Psalm 8:2b

The textual problem of Ps 8:2b in the MT reads literally “which to put” and is grammatically and stylistically problematic. The text begins with the relative pronoun אשר, followed by the Qal infinitive construct of נתן.⁵ Some scholars have attempted to preserve the awkward MT based on other occasions where the next line of a prayer is introduced by the particle אשר (cf. Ps 71:10);⁶ however, the ensuing form of the verb creates a word pair that is nearly incomprehensible without emending the text.⁷ “‘Which give’ is possible neither syntactically nor according to sense.”⁸ Preserving the awkward

4. The singular masculine object suffix refers to humankind (אנוש), so I have rendered it plural here and throughout verses 6-7.

5. Mark Smith, “Ps 8:2b-3: New Proposals for Old Problems,” 683.

6. Janet Dyk, ed., *Give Ear to My Words: Psalms and Other Poetry in and around the Hebrew Bible* (Amsterdam: Societas Hebraica Amstelodamensis, 1996), 13n.

7. Buttenwieser did read תנה as an infinitive of נתן but translated it as a passive, partly because of the Greek ἐπήρθη (aorist passive indicative). “Thou whose majesty is reflected in the skies.” M. Buttenwieser, *The Psalms, Chronologically Treated, with a New Translation*, Library of Biblical Studies (New York: KTAV, 1969; first published, 1938), 177-80.

8. Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 1-59: A Continental Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 178. Others suggest the Ugaritic root *tny* (to reiterate): Artur Weiser, *The Psalms* (Old Testament Library; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962).

MT or emending the text to the correct form of נתן is an option, as Syr and Targ read נתתה. The Septuagint reads ὅτι ἐπήρθη, which is not the typical rendering of נתן in the Septuagint. According to Albert Pietersma, “While the equation of אשר and ὅτι is attested elsewhere in Psalms . . . ἐπαίρω and נתן are uniquely paired in this passage, the standard in the LXX being נשא instead.”⁹ In fact, the Septuagint’s rendering of the half verse is almost entirely unique in relationship to the MT. “[I]n 2b there are several words that are non-defaults and thus not predictable, indicating perhaps a more than usual level of interpretive deliberation. Thus the equations ἐπαίρω, נתן; μεγαλοπρέπεια, הוֹד; ὑπεράνω, על are all unique to this verse.”¹⁰ This attests to the uniqueness of Ps 8:2b and the difficulty of the MT.

The only solution that preserves all of the consonants in the MT, proposed by Mitchell Dahood, is to move the consonants together forming the Piel¹¹ imperfect (cohortative with the energetic ending¹²) of שרת, to make אשרתנה (may I serve). In Hebrew, the energetic form, with a *nun* inserted between the verb stem and the cohortative ending (ה), “reflect an earlier stage of the language,”¹³ and the “subjunctive . . . the antecedent to the Hebrew cohortative.”¹⁴ That is why these forms are much more common in Ugaritic

9. Albert Pietersma, “Not Quite Angels,” in *Scripture in Transition: Essays on Septuagint, Hebrew Bible, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of Raija Sollamo* (eds. Jokiranta, Jutta and Anssi Voitila). Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 262 (255-74).

10. Pietersma, “No Quite Angels,” 262.

11. שרת always appears in the Piel in the Hebrew Bible. Francis Brown, et al., eds. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), 1058.

12. For an explanation of the energetic נ and the cohortative, see Bruce K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 347.

13. Waltke and O’Connor, 347.

14. Waltke and O’Connor, 496.

texts. The energetic *nun* can also appear between the verb stem and the suffix in nonperfective forms with singular suffixes, which occurs in Ps 8:5 with תזכרנו.¹⁵ The presence of the energetic form in Ps 8:5 supports the argument that it also occurs in Ps 8:2b.

Commentators have acknowledged Dahood's elegant solution, as it avoids emendation, but few adopt it because the meaning of the verb does not seem to fit within the thematic context of the poetry.¹⁶ Dahood translates "I will adore," and Peter Craigie follows Dahood and translates "I will worship."¹⁷ Perhaps these translations of אשרתנה as "I will worship" or "I will adore" are more easily understood in English than "may I serve," but if the intention of the psalmist was to convey worship or adoration, we might expect another verb, such as הלל, which is often used for praise directed toward Yahweh and his name (e.g., Pss 22:23-24, 27; 35:18; 44:9; 49:7; 56:5; 69:35; 74:21; 84:5; 96:4). I think these renderings of שרת by Dahood and Craigie cause many to gloss over the suggestion because these meanings for שרת are largely unattested. I will show in the next section that the verb שרת carries with it a much weightier sense of participation with and help toward the one being attended, served, or ministered to. The next section (and the rest of the thesis) will show how שרת relates to Yahweh's appointment of humanity to function as his servants. In Ps 8:5-9, it is clear that Yahweh has given humanity responsibility to exercise dominion on his behalf. The first person proclamation using

15. Waltke and O'Connor, 517-18.

16. For example, Judah Kraut, "The Birds and the Babes: The Structure and Meaning of Ps 8," *CBQ* 100 (2010): 13. Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 1-59: A Continental Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993).

17. Peter Craigie, *Psalms 1-50* (WBC 19; Waco, TX: Word books, 1983), 104-5.

שרת in Ps 8:2b is, in part, a response to Yahweh's appointment of humanity to serve him in creation. In order to more seriously consider Dahood's proposal for the corrupt text of verse 2b and clarify how I believe שרת functions in Ps 8, I will start by surveying the meaning of שרת in the Old Testament.¹⁸

Section 1.1: שרת

At first, it is not completely clear what it would mean to say "may I serve" (הודך על השמים). Before I explain the details of my translation, I will survey the use of שרת in the Old Testament and introduce my understanding of the verb's meaning in Ps 8. Here I have identified seven significant features of the verb: (1) as a master's servant or aide, (2) in close proximity to Yahweh in priestly functions, (3) associated with serving Yahweh's name, (4) in relationship to obedience to Torah, (5) service oriented directly toward Yahweh, (6) service in relationship to earthly combat, and (7) service in Yahweh's heavenly army.

18. In this chapter, I will discuss the usage and syntax of שרת, but I will solidify my argument for reading אשרתנה in chapter 3 of the thesis. The language of service/ministry does cohere with the re-appropriation of the promises on offer to David, applied to Yahweh's servant, in Deutero-Isaiah and (especially) Isa 60-62. If indeed Ps 8 is reappropriating the Davidic promises with a very high view of God-given agency to Yahweh's chosen people, it could make sense that the community reciting this psalm would say "may I serve!"

Section 1.1.1: As a Master's Servant or Aid

שרת is sometimes used to describe someone's service as an attendant or aid. In Gen 39:4, Joseph found favor with Potiphar “and attended [וישרת] him; he made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had.” In this case, the verb is used to identify someone as a type of servant or assistant that is concerned with the dealings of the household and the master's possessions. The designation of serving or attending in this case is clarified with the duty to oversee על-ביתו, literally, that which concerns his (Potiphar's) house. It may be relevant to note the use of על in close proximity to the verb שרת, as this also appears in Ps 8. In Ps 8, the arena in which the psalmist desires to serve concerns the heavens על-השמים, and in Gen 39:4, Joseph serves על-ביתו. This occurrence of שרת in the Old Testament introduces us to the nature in which the psalmist uses the verb in Ps 8, in the sense of serving or attending to that which concerns the master.¹⁹

Section 1.1.2: In Close Proximity to Yahweh in Priestly Functions

Most often, שרת is used for the work/ministry of the priests in the sanctuary. Exodus 28:35 specifies what Aaron must wear when he “ministers . . . when he goes into the holy place before [Yahweh], and when he comes out, so that he may not die.” This

19. See similar usages of attending to the needs of another in Gen 40:4. Also see instances of Joshua attending Moses in Exod 24:13; 33:11. In Num 11:28, Joshua has the title “assistant of Moses,” משרת משה (cf. Josh 1:1). 2 Samuel 13:17-18 uses שרת for personal servants.

type of “ministering” takes place in close proximity to Yahweh. The need to follow specific instructions for this ministry,²⁰ where death may result from improper observance,²¹ makes this abundantly clear. Similarly, Exod 28:43 says that Aaron and his sons are “to minister in the holy place.”²² Numbers 18:2 says that Aaron’s brothers from the tribe of Levi will assist him and his sons while they are “in front of the tent of the covenant” (וישרתוך ואתה ובניך אתך לפני אהל העדת). Numbers 18:3 follows with the warning, “They [the Levites] shall perform duties for you and for the whole tent. But they must not approach either the utensils of the sanctuary or the altar, otherwise both they and you will die.” The Levites must follow special instructions or they will all die. One must serve (שרת) properly in order to survive being in close proximity to Yahweh’s glory in the holy place.

The care one must take in order to serve (שרת) Yahweh in close proximity to his glory in the holy place without dying underscores a significant point for the use of שרת in Ps 8. The author desires to assist Yahweh על־השמים. By serving the glory of Yahweh in the holy place, the priest, by extension, serves the person of Yahweh, who dwells in the heavens. Ascending to heaven and serving the person of Yahweh face to face in the heavenly sphere is probably out of the question, but the priest can serve Yahweh על־השמים

20. See also Exod 39:26.

21. See also Exod 30:20.

22. See also Exod 29:30; 35:19; 39:1, 41. This priestly activity extends to the tent of meeting and the ark of the covenant. In Num 1:50, שרת is used to describe the job of the Levites to “tend” or “take care of” “the tabernacle and all its equipment.” In Num 3:6-8, Yahweh instructs the tribe of Levi to “assist” “Aaron the priest” and to “be in charge of all the furnishings of the tent of meeting and attend to the duties for the Israelites as they do service at the tabernacle.” In Num 4:4-14, the word appears three times to describe that “the service of the Kohathites relating to the tent of meeting concerns the most holy things” (v. 4), related to the Ark of the Covenant.

by performing rituals before Yahweh's glory in the tabernacle. Psalm 8's proclamation to serve Yahweh על־השמים shortens the cognitive distance between serving Yahweh in the holy place and participating in Yahweh's overarching pursuit of displaying his imperial reign in cosmos. The person considering the bold theology of Ps 8 must tread lightly, hence the verb choice of שרת, to avoid the danger that exists when drawing near to the presence of Yahweh on Earth in pursuit of promoting Yahweh's mastery in the heavens.

Num 16:8-9 articulates further the idea of drawing near to Yahweh in the process of serving him. "Then Moses said to Korah, 'Hear now, you Levites! Is it too little for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to allow you to approach him in order to perform [לעבד] the duties of the Lord's tabernacle, and to stand before the congregation and serve them [לשרתם]?'” Here, serving the congregation and performing the duties of the tabernacle is associated with approaching Yahweh. Participating in the duties of the Lord's tabernacle puts the participant in closer proximity to the person of Yahweh in the heavens; the participant does not ascend to the heavens, but the participant understands that the actions in the holy place on earth promote the person of Yahweh in heaven. Psalm 8's proclamation to serve Yahweh may place the orator in a position to approach Yahweh more directly. In each of the texts in which שרת is used in relation to the tent of meeting; the concept remains the same. That is, when שרת is not used to describe the service from one being to another, it is used to describe actions that take place in close proximity to Yahweh.

Section 1.1.3: Associated with Serving Yahweh's Name

The concept of שרת in relationship to the name of Yahweh also fits with Ps 8. After the death of Aaron, Yahweh “set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord to minister to him [לשרתו], and to bless in his name, to this day” (Deut 10:8; cf. Deut 21:5). This use of שרת provides a near parallel to how it is used in my translation of Ps 8:2 above, “Yahweh our Lord, how majestic is your name over all the earth! May I serve your heavenly power/victory!” The author of Ps 8 gives Yahweh’s name a type of blessing, declaring its majesty, followed by a desire to serve (אשרתנה) Yahweh.²³

Section 1.1.4: In Relationship to Obedience to Torah

The use of שרת is also associated with the priestly view of kingship. This usage is very close to the previous usage in relationship to Yahweh’s name. Deuteronomy 17:12 uses שרת to describe the priest’s capacity to minister or to serve Yahweh. This text also carries the threat of death when addressing the conditions necessary for existing in close proximity to Yahweh. “As for anyone who presumes to disobey the priest appointed to minister there to the Lord your God, or the judge, that person shall die” (Deut 17:12). This text appears immediately before Deuteronomy’s instructions for kingship in 17:14-20, in which kingship is subject to Torah. The instructions Deut 17:11 gives for

²³. In Deut 18:5-7, the Levites are described as ministering in the name of Yahweh, לשרת בשם־יהוה.

obeying priests are very similar to the instructions kings are given for adhering to Torah.

Compare Deut 17:11-12 and Deut 17:19-20.

You must carry out fully the law that they interpret for you or the ruling that they announce to you; do not turn aside from the decision that they announce to you, either to the right or to the left. As for anyone who presumes to disobey the priest appointed to minister (לשרת) there to the Lord your God, or the judge, that person shall die. So you shall purge the evil from Israel. (Deut 17:11-12)

It shall remain with him and he shall read in it all the days of his life, so that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, diligently observing all the words of this law and these statutes, neither exalting himself above other members of the community nor turning aside from the commandment, either to the right or to the left, so that he and his descendants may reign long over his kingdom in Israel. (Deut 17:19-20)

Verses 11-12 instruct strict obedience to the priest not to turn aside from any decision “either to the right or to the left.” The same is said of the king and Torah. The king must not turn aside from the commandment “either to the right or to the left.” If the author of Ps 8 is writing under the influence of Torah, then by using שרת, it is possible the author desires to serve Yahweh without turning aside from the commandments either to the right or to the left. Psalm 8’s incorporation of שרת and its royal language in verses 6-7 suggest that Ps 8’s view of kingship may be similar to that of Deuteronomy, in which the ability of the king’s dynastic rule to succeed is dependent upon the king’s ability to uphold Torah and not deviate from it “either to the right or to the left.” Ps 8, however, does not have a king in mind. Instead, Ps 8 applies royal language to humanity at large, crowning them with glory and majesty (v. 6) and expresses a desire to serve (אשרתנה) Yahweh (v. 2). The parallel language used in Deut 17 for the required Torah obedience of both priests and kings, in order for priests to serve (שרת) Yahweh and kings to rule successfully, suggests

that Ps 8's concept for serving Yahweh with royal attributes carries with it similar stipulations as Deut 17.²⁴

Section 1.1.5: Service Oriented Directly toward Yahweh

In addition to the texts that portray humans serving in the presence of Yahweh, several texts use the verb for service/ministry directly toward Yahweh.²⁵ In 1 Chron 16:4, David “appointed certain of the Levites as ministers [משרתים] before the ark of the Lord, to invoke [להזכיר], to thank, and to praise the Lord, the God of Israel.” This text may partly illuminate how the author of Ps 8 envisioned serving Yahweh. It is notable that the hiphil of זכר, to invoke or cause to remember, is how Levites were to serve (שרת) Yahweh in this text. Psalm 8:5 also uses זכר, “What is humankind that you remember them?” The psalmist's desire to serve Yahweh in Ps 8:2b includes praise (Ps 8:2a, 10) and a sense of

24. In Deut 17:20, the king's sons (בניו), or his descendants, will continue to rule if the king follows Torah. In Ps 8, following the declaration to serve (אשרתה) in verse 2, Yahweh appoints humanity and the “son of humanity” (בן־אדם) in verse 5 by crowning him with glory and honor in verse 6 and making him to rule over the works of Yahweh's hands in verse 7. The serving of Yahweh in verse 2, combined with the royalizing of humanity in verses 6-7 connects the service (שרת) of priests to the enthroning of humanity. Psalm 8 applies Deut 17:20's royal requirement to all humanity (אנוש) and the descendant of humanity (בן־אדם). The speaker in Ps 8 is in awe over Yahweh's bestowing of royal attributes to humankind. The speaker wants to seize the opportunity to rule over the works of Yahweh's hands. In order to do so, the speaker must serve in such a way that is pleasing to Yahweh. The speaker in Ps 8 is not a king but recognizes that Yahweh's gift of royalizing humanity probably comes with strings attached—that is, like the king in Deuteronomy 17, the speaker will be held to a certain standard in order to successfully rule over the works of Yahweh's hands. In Chapter 2, I will discuss the ethics of kingship and the king's ability to function as Yahweh's mediator. The king does not שרת, but as I have shown here, priests do, and a priest has to שרת in specific ways to preserve their lives in the presence of Yahweh. I have made these comparisons between Deuteronomy 17, שרת, and Ps 8 to introduce how the the successful roles of the priest and the king are both connected to ethical requirements, and the verb שרת appears in these contexts.

25. In 1Sam 2:11; 2:18; and 3:1, Samuel ministers before Yahweh.

gratefulness or awe (Ps 8:5). One might also suggest that the psalmist's desire to serve, directed at Yahweh, would invoke Yahweh to remember, which Yahweh does in Ps 8:5.

Section 1.1.6: Service in Relationship to Combat

There is also evidence for the use of שרת in relationship to combat. 1 Chronicles 27:1 uses שרת to describe the service of officers who served the king in a military setting.

This is the list of the people of Israel, the heads of families, the commanders of the thousands and the hundreds, and their officers who served [המשרתים] the king in all matters concerning the divisions that came and went, month after month throughout the year, each division numbering twenty-four thousand.

1 Chronicles 28:1 also does this.

David assembled at Jerusalem all the officials of Israel, the officials of the tribes, the officers of the divisions that served [המשרתים] the king, the commanders of the thousands, the commanders of the hundreds, the stewards of all the property and cattle of the king and his sons, together with the palace officials, the mighty warriors, and all the warriors.

Here, 1 Chronicles uses שרת to describe those who served the king in matters related to combat. This illustrates the versatility of שרת. Not only does שרת function in matters of attending to masters, ministering in the priesthood, and serving Yahweh, but it is also used to describe the activity of those are responsible for helping the king achieve victory in war.

Section 1.1.7: Service in Yahweh's Heavenly Army

K. Engelken illustrates another way that שרת is used in the sense of serving Yahweh's power/victory. Engelken suggests that the verb is sometimes used for those who serve among Yahweh's hosts in the heavenly realm. Engelken says "the term is reserved for the heavenly powers surrounding the throne of Yahweh, heavenly king and creator" (e.g., Ps 103:21; 104:4).²⁶ This idea is relatively consistent with my proposal for Ps 8, that the psalmist desires to serve Yahweh's heavenly power/victory, especially in Ps 103:19-21.

The Lord has established his throne in the heavens,
and his kingdom rules over all.
Bless the Lord, O you his angels,
you mighty ones who do his bidding,
obedient to his spoken word.
Bless the Lord, all his hosts,
his ministers [משרתי] that do his will. (Ps 103:19-21)

Here the psalmist blesses the ministers (or servants משרתי), parallel to the hosts of Yahweh's heavenly army, as a result of Yahweh's establishment of his throne in the heavens and ruling over all things. These beings make up Yahweh's heavenly army and support the heavenly kingdom. In this way, Ps 103's use of שרת seems to cohere with the concept of serving Yahweh's power/victory. In section 1.1.2, I explained that a priest can שרת the glory of Yahweh in the holy place on earth, which in turn promotes the person of Yahweh in the heavens. Psalm 103 uses the verb שרת to depict Yahweh's heavenly

26. K. Engelken, "שרת," Pages 503-514 in vol. 15 of *TDOT*, edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren. 15 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 509.

warriors who serve the person of Yahweh in heaven directly. This use of שרת demonstrates that the verb can be used for combat both on earth and in heaven.

Preliminary Conclusions about שרת

These seven uses of שרת show the versatility of the verb in its ability to portray the service of individuals both on earth and in heaven, often working toward the promotion of Yahweh's reign. Using the verb שרת, household servants can attend to their masters; priests can encounter the glory of Yahweh in the holy place and serve him without dying; worshipers can promote the name of Yahweh and demonstrate obedience to Torah; priests can draw near to the person of Yahweh and approach him directly; officers can serve the king in combat; and Yahweh's hosts can participate in the cosmic military effort to establish Yahweh's throne in the heavens. In this thesis, each of these features of שרת will help us understand what the author of Ps 8 meant by "may I serve your heavenly power/victory." Now that we have a working understanding of שרת, we can return to Ps 8 and what the author meant when proclaiming the desire to serve, יהוה על־השמים. Next, I will discuss the meaning of הוד, its usage in the Old Testament, and its meaning in Ps 8:2b.

Section 1.2: הוֹד as Power/Victory

Like Ps 8's use of שָׂרָה, the meaning of הוֹד in Ps 8 is less typical. However, the word appears only twenty-four times in the Old Testament. In the examples below, I will show how הוֹד is often used in relationship to Yahweh's power, displayed by his mighty acts in creation, and sometimes specifically, his power and victory over human enemies and cosmic foes. I will also suggest how humans possessing הוֹד may be able to participate in combat with cosmic foes. At several points in this discussion on הוֹד, the verb שָׂרָה also appears within the same texts, which is suggestive of their pairing in Ps 8.

In 1 Chron 16:4 the duties of those serving [משרתים] Yahweh include invoking, thanking, and praising. Next, individuals are assigned musical parts in 16:5-6, and a psalm of thanksgiving follows. In this psalm (1 Chron 16:7-36), הוֹד is associated with Yahweh's supremacy over any other god or idol. See 1 Chron 16:23-27.

- 23 Sing to the Lord, all the earth.
Tell of his salvation from day to day.
- 24 Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous works among all the peoples.
- 25 For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised;
he is to be revered above all gods.
- 26 For all the gods of the peoples are idols,
but the Lord made the heavens.
- 27 Honor [הוֹד] and majesty are before him;
strength and joy are in his place.

Yahweh's superiority is made known by his salvation (or protection from enemies in vv. 19-22), marvelous works, and his creation of the heavens. Verse 27 illustrates a victorious Yahweh with הוֹד and majesty before him. Because of Yahweh's victory, "strength [עֹז] and

joy are in his place.” This is actually similar to Ps 8:3, in which Yahweh establishes עו by putting an end to his enemies.²⁷ This psalm in 1 Chronicles, performed by the משרתים, is actually similar to Ps 8 in a few other ways as well.

Chronicles 16:8-13 exhorts Yahweh’s servant Israel to call on his name, tell of and remember his wonderful works:

- 8 O give thanks to the Lord, call on his name,
make known his deeds among the peoples.
- 9 Sing to him, sing praises to him,
tell of all his wonderful works.
- 10 Glory in his holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.
- 11 Seek the Lord and his strength,
seek his presence continually.
- 12 Remember the wonderful works he has done,
his miracles, and the judgments he uttered,
- 13 O offspring of his servant Israel,
children of Jacob, his chosen ones.

Ps 8 does something similar by magnifying Yahweh’s name in verses 2a and 10 and recalling Yahweh’s victory against enemies (v. 3), and his creating work (v. 4).

1 Chronicles 16:28-34 also has similarities to Ps 8, while repeating these themes.

- 28 Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.
- 29 Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;
bring an offering, and come before him.
Worship the Lord in holy splendor;
- 30 tremble before him, all the earth.
The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved.
- 31 Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice,
and let them say among the nations, “The Lord is king!”
- 32 Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
let the field exult, and everything in it.
- 33 Then shall the trees of the forest sing for joy

27. This will be explained in section 2 of this chapter.

before the Lord, for he comes to judge the earth.
34 O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures forever.

Verse 30 states that the world is firmly established (תכוון), and the same verb, כוון, is used in Ps 8:4 for Yahweh's creation of moon and stars. 1 Chronicles 16:31-32 follows a similar pattern of imagery as Ps 8, starting with the heavens, moving to the sea and the earth and all that fills them. Finally, both texts begin and end with the praise of Yahweh's name. The verse following the Chronicler's psalm (1 Chron 16:37) says those reciting the psalm continued to "minister [לשרת] regularly before the ark." This psalm in 1 Chron 16 provides an example, similar to Ps 8, where שרת and הוד appear in close proximity, as those משרתים sang of Yahweh's הוד.

Similarly, Job provides some interesting occurrences of הוד that speak to the word's association with power and perhaps victory over cosmic foes. Job 37 describes Yahweh's awesome power and wondrous works. Verse 22b says על־אלוה נורא הוד. Here הוד appears with the prepositional phrase על־אלוה, "around Eloah." This is similar to how I have tried to render על־השמים in Ps 8 as heavenly, understood as around or in the realm of the heavens.²⁸

In Job 40:9a, Yahweh challenges Job, saying, "have you an arm like God?" After this, Yahweh challenges Job to take on Yahweh's powerful qualities. In Job 40:10, he

28. How Ps 8 envisions serving in the realm of the heavens will be explained in the course of the thesis. See also the following examples. Job 39:20 uses הוד to describe the terrible sound of a locust. This use of הוד, while peculiar, does speak to the word's flexibility. This example shows how the word amplifies that which makes the one being described a force to be reckoned with. Even more suggestive of my argument for הוד is its use to describe Yahweh's voice in Isa 30:30, as he rains blows from the sky upon his enemies. In these texts, הוד is something awe-inspiring, other-worldly, uncanny, and overloading to the senses. In Job 39:20 and Isa 30:30, הוד seems to give the assailant power to strike fear in and destroy their enemies. I argue in this thesis that the author of Ps 8 wishes to promote the power (הוד) of Yahweh so that Yahweh's enemies are similarly defeated, hence translation, "May I serve your heavenly power/victory!"

says, “Deck yourself with majesty and dignity; clothe yourself with glory [הוד] and splendor [הדר].” Next, in verses 11-14, Yahweh specifies what Job would have to do to exhibit Yahweh’s power.

- 11 Pour out the overflowings of your anger,
and look on all who are proud, and abase them.
- 12 Look on all who are proud, and bring them low;
tread down the wicked where they stand.
- 13 Hide them all in the dust together;
bind their faces in the world below.
- 14 Then I will also acknowledge to you
that your own right hand can give you victory.

Here, הוד is portrayed as something Job would need to be able to claim victory over enemies the way that Yahweh does. Yahweh elaborates on this in the following chapters, detailing the great beasts and cosmic foes that Yahweh has the power to tame. In Job 40:15 and 19, Yahweh says, “Look at Behemoth, which I made just as I made you; . . . It is the first of the great acts of God—only its Maker can approach it with the sword.” Then Yahweh challenges Job in 41:1, “Can you draw out Leviathan with a fishhook or press down its tongue with a cord?” In Job 40-41, Yahweh asks Job if he can put on הוד and defeat enemies as Yahweh does—if Job can put on הוד and approach Behemoth with the sword or draw out Leviathan with a fishhook. Here, הוד is directly linked to Yahweh’s ability to show power (and presumably victory) over cosmic foes.

Reading this text in Job brings to the forefront the audacity of Ps 8’s desire to serve Yahweh’s הוד. However, this is one reason I think the author of Ps 8 uses אשרתנה. The verb שרה has the flexibility to be used for service in combat (see above), and it is widely used in priestly contexts for activities in close proximity to Yahweh, the tent of

meeting, and the ark of the covenant. Similar to Job's need for humility, care must be taken in these contexts to avoid destruction. שרת is the kind of service that allows priests or other beings, including nonhuman sentient beings, to draw near to the power and person of Yahweh without dying, which would be advantageous if one were to consider serving the הוֹד of Yahweh.

Psalm 104 also uses הוֹד in association with Yahweh's power over and defeat of cosmic foes. Psalm 104:1 says that Yahweh is "clothed with הוֹד and הִדָּר," as the Psalm introduces Yahweh's creative power in verses 1-4. While describing Yahweh's activity from the heavens, verse 4 uses the verb שרת to describe Yahweh's control over creation: "You make the winds your messengers, fire and flame your ministers." In Ps 104:1-4, Yahweh's status as clothed with הוֹד is illustrated by his power in creation, in which fire and flame are Yahweh's משרתיו. When Yahweh is clothed with הוֹד (v. 1), he showcases the ability to create (v. 3a) and rule in the heavens, making the clouds his chariot (v. 3b). When Yahweh is clothed with הִדָּר, the natural elements of wind and fire become his servants (משרתיו, v. 4). When "fire and flame" are משרתיו, Yahweh appears clothed in הוֹד. In the language of Ps 8, I would say of Ps 104:1-4 that fire and flame serve (שרת) and promote the heavenly הוֹד of Yahweh. As the text continues, it describes Yahweh's creating acts in the theme of chaoskampf in verses 5-9.

- 5 You set the earth on its foundations,
so that it shall never be shaken.
- 6 You cover it with the deep as with a garment;
the waters stood above the mountains.
- 7 At your rebuke they flee;
at the sound of your thunder they take to flight.
- 8 They rose up to the mountains, ran down to the valleys

to the place that you appointed for them.
9 You set a boundary that they may not pass,
so that they might not again cover the earth.

The waters answer to the rebuke of Yahweh, and the sound of Yahweh's thunder causes the waters to take flight. This sets up the subjugation of Leviathan in verses 24-26.

24 O Lord, how manifold are your works!
In wisdom you have made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.
25 Yonder is the sea, great and wide,
creeping things innumerable are there,
living things both small and great.
26 There go the ships,
and Leviathan that you formed to sport in it.

When clothed with הוד (v. 1) and served by משרתיו (v. 4), Yahweh sets the earth on its foundations (v. 5), rebukes/sets boundaries for the waters (vv. 7-9), and makes Leviathan his plaything (v. 26). Put differently, when fire and flame serve (שרת) Yahweh's הוד, Yahweh exercises power in creation and enjoys victory over chaos as Leviathan swims in his sea. This illustration from Ps 104 illustrates how הוד is used in relationship to Yahweh's power and victory in creation and how שרת can be used to serve Yahweh's power and victory (cf. Ps 148).²⁹

Another instance of the use of הוד in relationship to power and combat appears in Ps 21, this time in relationship to a king. Psalm 21 praises Yahweh for his glorification of the king. The king rejoices in the strength of Yahweh (v. 2), and Yahweh grants the king's desires (v. 3). Yahweh crowns the king (v. 4; cf. Ps 8:6) and bestows upon him splendor

29. Psalm 148:1b opens with the statement "Praise Yahweh מְגִידֵה שְׁמִים." It is interesting to consider this in comparison to Ps 8:2b, in which the call to action takes place עֲלֵיהֶם שְׁמִים. Both texts direct action toward Yahweh in relationship to the heavens.

[הוד] and majesty [הדר] (v. 6). Verse 6 reads, “His glory is great through your help; splendor and majesty you bestow on him” (גדול כבודו בישועתך הוד והדר תשוה עליו). Then, verses 9-14 describe how Yahweh will destroy the kingdom’s enemies. Because verses 19-14 detail how Yahweh helps bring the king victory over his enemies, the bestowing of הוד and הדר could also be related to the king’s victory. Similarly, Psalm 45:4-5a says of a king, “Gird your sword on your thigh, O mighty one, in your glory [הודך] and majesty [הדרך]. In your majesty ride on victoriously.” The text details how this leads to the defeat of enemies in verse 7. Here, we see הוד associated with combat and victory.

Perhaps the most important use of הוד is in Num 27:20. Here, Yahweh instructs Moses to transfer some of his הוד (authority or power) to Joshua, who is often referred to as Moses’s aide (שרת). As a result, Joshua receives authority to speak on behalf of Yahweh. The word הוד in this context is connected to Moses’s, and subsequently Joshua’s, ability to mediate Torah³⁰ in Num 27:20. It could be argued that Moses had the most direct access to Yahweh of any character in the Hebrew Bible, and presumably his הוד had something to do with that. Consider Moses and Job in relationship to הוד. Yahweh challenges Job, asking him if he can put on הוד and subdue Leviathan. Moses, on the other hand, possessed הוד and had a significant role in Yahweh’s battle with Pharaoh, who is mythologized as Leviathan in Ezek 29:1-7; 32:2.

30. Pss 111:2-3 and 145:4-7 praise Yahweh for his mighty acts in association with righteousness.

Section 1.3: Translation of Psalm 8:2b

I have two proposals for my rendering of Ps 8:2b, and I think both are viable. Both translations consider על־השמים as an adjectival phrase, “in the realm of the heavens” or “heavenly.” First, it is possible the verse could be translated “May I serve your heavenly power.” This translation coheres with the examples of הוד discussed above, in which this attribute of Yahweh is responsible for his glorious reign on earth and especially in the cosmos. Second, it is possible the verse could be translated “May I serve your heavenly victory.” Nicholas Wyatt suggests that הוד means victory in several of the texts I surveyed above.³¹ This translation of הוד in Ps 8 would appear to be the result of the text interpreting itself—that is, if the goal is to serve Yahweh’s power, then inevitably (in the view of the psalmist) this also serves Yahweh’s victory and supremacy in the cosmos. In chapter 2, I will argue that Ps 8 (similar to Gen 1) is adapting Mesopotamian (and possibly Egyptian) royal ideology and the idea that the actions of the king as the deity’s representative/image were intrinsically connected to the “cosmic harmony.”³² If Ps 8 is interacting with this Assyrian/Egyptian idea and (similar to Gen 1) applied the image-of-god designation to all of humanity, then it is possible that the psalmist

31. N. Wyatt, in *Myths of Power: a Study of Royal Myth and Ideology in Ugaritic and Biblical Traditions* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1996), 241. Here, Wyatt argues that הוד “means ‘victory’ rather than ‘glory’, according to the usage of 1 Chron 29:11, Job 40:9-10, Isa 30:30 and frequently in the psalms (21:6, 45:4, 96:6 [= 1Chron 16:26], 104:1, 145:5 and 148:13.”

32. S. Parpola, *Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars*, State Archives of Assyria 10 (Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1993), XVI.

understood this to mean that humans, as God's images, have a part to play in Yahweh's effort to maintain "cosmic harmony" in his now but not yet victory over cosmic foes.³³

Despite having presented these as two separate options, they really are one and the same if Yahweh's power is established by his victory over cosmic foes. For the time being I will leave it as both "May I serve your heavenly power/victory." While this reading may at first appear just as contrived as other renderings of the MT's corrupt Ps 8:2b, my translation will become more and more clear as the thesis progresses.³⁴ I think the peculiarity of this verse is what could have eventually caused *אשרתנה* to be separated to *אשר תנה* in the MT. This particular usage of *שרת* is not common either, which could have further influenced the decision to split the word.

Section 2: *עוללים וינקים* and the Goodly Gods

In the previous section, I have provided some evidence from which we can further explore the possibility that Ps 8:2 expresses the psalmist's desire to participate in Yahweh's heavenly power/victory. This groundwork will help us reach a clearer understanding of Ps 8:3. The second notable translation issue that this project resolves is the puzzling imagery of nursing babes in verse 3. The strange imagery of nursing infants is continually

33. Jon Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988). See 111-17 for an especially helpful understanding of this concept in relation to Ps 8, even though my translation choices differ from his. I will explain this connection to ancient Near Eastern royal ideology in chapter 2.

34. When I compare Ps 8 to Isaiah's servant tradition in chapter 3 of this thesis, the relationship between Isaiah 42, 51, 55, 56 and 60-62 will help significantly in understanding the reason for reading the 1st person cohortative of *שרת* in verse 2b.

problematic for translators. Some relate the metaphors to God's strength in weakness.³⁵ Others have suggested that YHWH's putting an end to the enemy allows the babes to be heard.³⁶ One popular view of this text is that even babies praise Yahweh. However, this is difficult because there is no record of this phenomenon in the Hebrew Bible.³⁷ Kraus says,

The content of this verse is in the OT without even the remotest parallel passage. . . . Did children sing along in this song of praise? Or does the singer have something like a parable, or even an episodic conception, in the mind? These possibilities can only be suggested, for every attempt to delineate them ends in a tortuous interpretation.³⁸

If Ps 8:3 does reference literal nursing babes, in some way praising or participating in Yahweh's creation, it would certainly be unique, especially when "the OT mentions 'babies' twenty times, usually as victims of oppression, war, and death" and "'Sucklings' appear eleven times, often alongside 'babies' and again usually as victims."³⁹ Another possibility for understanding the imagery of nurslings is that this image refers to the Ugaritic text *CAT 1.23*, in which newborn nursling deities wreak havoc on the created order. In this section, I will argue that Ps 8:3 is drawing upon this Ugaritic mytheme.

35. Artur Weiser, *The Psalms*, 142.

36. Janet Dyk, ed., *Give Ear to My Words*, 13-14.

37. John Goldingay, *Psalms Volume 1: Psalms 1-41* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 156. On this page, Goldingay cites Oystein Lund, "From the Mouths of Babes and Infants You Have Established Strength," *SJOT* 11 (1997): 85.

38. Kraus, *Psalms 1-59*, 181. There is, however, not a reference to Yahweh's defeating *ynqim* (the so-called goodly gods) either, but there are multiple examples of psalms that connect Yahweh's defeat of cosmic foes with the establishment of creation. Even though the foes are not symbolized as nursing babes, they are characterized as rivers and seas and various monsters. I will discuss these examples in chapter 2 of the thesis.

39. Oystein Lund, "From the Mouths of Babes and Infants," 85.

I will argue that the image of nursing babes in Ps 8 refers to the goodly gods of *CAT 1.23* in three stages. (1) I will examine *CAT 1.23* and how its imagery might have influenced the author of Ps 8. (2) I will show how the phrase “from the mouth” (מפי) in the Old Testament provides further evidence for suggesting a connection between Ps 8 and *CAT 1.23*. Contrary to the way in which Ps 8:3 is often interpreted, this phrase, using מן plus פה, never refers to the praise of Yahweh. In fact, it is often a phrase used to identify various threats. (3) The phrase יסדה עז is unique; however, there are instances in which the concept of Yahweh’s establishment of (יסד) creation is connected to strength (עז). These examples show that Ps 8 may be an example of Yahweh’s creation of the world via conflict. If Ps 8 is indeed an example of *chaoskampf*, then the image of the goodly gods makes the most sense of Ps 8:3.

Section 2.1: *CAT 1.23* and Psalm 8

It is impossible to say how familiar the author of Ps 8 may have been with the traditions associated with this Ugaritic text. I am not suggesting any kind of direct link, rather that the motif or mytheme of the goodly gods was well known enough in the ancient Near East that its themes survived long enough for Hebrew authors to interact with them. In this sense, there are multiple parallels that might be drawn between *CAT 1.23* and Ps 8. (1) Both texts refer to deities in relationship to celestial bodies. (2) Both texts contain the same animal imagery, “the birds of the air” and “the fish of the sea.”

(3) Both texts contain first person proclamations from a priestly type figure. In this section, I will survey these themes in *CAT 1.23* and show how they suggest that Ps 8 incorporated the image of the goodly gods. These three parallels between Ps 8 and *CAT 1.23* also suggest that the psalmist incorporated the image of the goodly gods to help illustrate how humans might serve the power/victory of Yahweh against cosmic foes.

Section 2.1.1: Celestial Bodies

The goodly gods are the newborn gods to El's wives. Lines 30-52 describe El's intercourse with his wives. In lines 52-54, the text announces the birth of the goodly gods, named Dawn and Dusk, and an offering is made, perhaps in celebration.

Word is brought to El:
"Paired wives of El have genuine birth."
"What did they bear?"
"A pair is born, Dawn and Dusk."
Raise an offering to Lady Sun,
Thanks to the immovable stars.⁴⁰

There could be a shared motif between the celestial bodies in *CAT 1.23* (as deities) and Ps 8:4, in which Yahweh affixes the luminaries. Mark Smith considers Lady Sun and the immovable stars (Smith translates "stationary stars") with El's astral family. The attention *CAT 1.23* pays to the celestial bodies in relationship to El and his newborn nurslings can remind us of Ps 8 "insofar as it displays the relationship of the astral bodies to the creator

40. Translation by Simon B. Parker, *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry* (Society of Biblical Literature: Atlanta, 1997), 212. Smith, *The Rituals and Myths of the Feast of the Goodly Gods of KTU/CAT 1.23*, 101-2. There may be a connection here with the "stationary stars" of *CAT 1.23*. Smith says "Ps 8 provides a general analogue for 1.12.54 [Make an offering to Lady Sun, and to the stationary stars], insofar as it displays the relationship of the astral bodies to the creator deity" (101). In the context of *CAT 1.23*, Smith identifies lady sun and the stationary stars with El's astral family (102).

deity.”⁴¹ To me this is not as strong a parallel as the animal imagery and the priestly figure (see below), but taking the three parallels together, it is worth noting that both Ps 8 and *CAT 1.23* show an interest in the celestial bodies.

If Ps 8 and *CAT 1.23* share this motif, Ps 8 is deploying it in a much different way. In Ps 8, the reference to moon and stars demonstrate Yahweh’s power in the heavens and majestic name over all the earth (Ps 8:1, 10), and the celestial bodies appear less as deities and more as objects in Yahweh’s creation. This could presuppose an adversarial relationship between the texts in which the author of Ps 8 seeks to legitimize Yahweh as the imperial deity who creates the luminaries, meaning, if we consider Yahweh as the creator of moon and stars, in relationship to *CAT 1.23*, the threat of the newborn deities (dawn and dusk) and the offerings made to sun and stars are rendered impotent compared to Yahweh, who formed the universe. In the Assurbanipal prisms, the king seeks to legitimize his kingship by stating his origin from and appointment by the gods. This includes the astral deities, Sîn, “the lord of the lunar crown,” and Šamaš.

I, Ashurbanipal, the creation of (the god) Aššur and the goddess Mullissu, the senior son of the king of the House of Succession, the one whom (the god) Aššur and the god Sîn the lord of the (lunar) crown—nominated in distant days to be king and created in the womb of his mother for shepherding Assyria, (and the one for whom) the deities Šamaš, Adad, and Ištar declared my exercising the kingship through their firm decision(s).⁴²

Here, again, we might note that Ps 8 positions the luminaries as creations of Yahweh, which in comparison to this Assurbanipal text, would seem to suggest that Yahweh and his vicegerent(s) are the superior imperial powers. If Ps 8 is deploying the mytheme of

41. Smith, *The Rituals and Myths*, 101-2.

42. RINAP 5 Asbpl 11, i, 1-7.

the goodly gods, then their presence in the text would certainly be adversarial to Yahweh, as they appear in the verse in parallelism with Yahweh's enemies. "Away from the mouths of nursing infants, you have established a stronghold on account of your enemies, to stop the foe and the avenger" (Ps 8:3). As mentioned above, the psalmist's desire to serve Yahweh's power/victory would seem to imply that the author of Ps 8 desires to serve Yahweh's power/victory over the so-called goodly gods. The animal imagery and the role of the priest in *CAT 1.23* will begin to illustrate how the the author of Ps 8 may have conceived of serving Yahweh in this way.

Section 2.1.2: Birds of the Sky and Fish of the Sea

Following the offering made to Lady Sun and the stationary stars, the description of El's intercourse is repeated in lines 55-57. Then, lines 57-61 repeat the birth of the goodly gods:

Both travail and give birth,
Birth to the gracious gods.
Paired devourers of the day that bore them,
Who suck the teats of [the Lady's (?)] breast.

Word is brought to El;
"Paired wives of El have given birth."
"What did they bear?"
"The gracious gods ...

Paired devourers of the day that bore them,
Who suck the teats of the Lady's breast.⁴³

43. Translation by Simon B. Parker, *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, 212-13.

Immediately after the birth of the day-old devourers and their description as the ones who nurse in lines 57-61 (*ynqm*; cf. Ps 8:3 and ינקם), the text describes the threat of their mouths in lines 61-64 (cf. Ps 8:3 and מפּי).

One lip to earth,
The other to the sky.
Then enter their mouths
Birds of the sky,
Fish from the sea.
Rushing to eat, bite by bite,
Gorging their mouths left and right,
But even so, not sated.⁴⁴

In *CAT 1.23*, the mouths of the goodly gods threaten the created order. The newborn goodly gods are characterized by a ferocious appetite and appear to consume everything they can get their lips around, posing a threat to birds of the sky, fish of the sea, and presumably all living creatures between sky and sea. There is a possible parallel here to the list of animals that humanity rules over in Ps 8:9a, for example, how *CAT 1.23* lines 57-64 (in which the goodly gods are described as *ynqm*, and the threat of their mouths consumes birds of the sky, fish of the sea, and everything in between) compares with Ps 8:2b-3, 7-9.

May I serve your heavenly power/victory!
Away from the mouths of nursing [ינקם] babes,
you have established a stronghold against your harassers,
to stop the foe and the avenger. (Ps 8:2b-3)

You will make them rule over the works of your hands;
you put everything underneath their feet,
Sheep and cattle, all of them,
even the beasts of the field,

44. Translation from Simon B. Parker, *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, 213. Smith, *The Rituals and Myths*, 100. Smith suggests that this offering is presented as an appropriate meal, in contrast to the chaotic insatiable appetites that follow in ll. 61b-64a.

birds of the air and fish of the sea,
the one who crosses the paths of the seas. (Ps 8:7-9)

This possible parallel with *CAT 1.23* provides some clarification as to why the psalmist might desire to serve the power/victory of Yahweh. In Ps 8:7-9, Yahweh is setting humanity to rule over the works of his hands and uses similar animal imagery as *CAT 1.23* to illustrate this dominion. If Yahweh has appointed humanity to oversee the created order of living things, including the birds of the air and fish of the sea, the mouths of the goodly gods would pose a threat to these creatures and potentially illicit a response from the psalmist, seeking to defend Yahweh's creation from these cosmic foes. This more clearly explains why the psalmist would write, "Away from the mouths of nursing babes you have established a stronghold because of your harassers, to stop the foe and the avenger." The mouths of the newborn nursing goodly gods are a threat that must be dealt with in order to establish stability/strength, to put a stop to Yahweh's/humanity's/creation's enemies. This is why I have chosen to render צורריך in the literal sense of harassers, to draw attention to the disruptive nature of the goodly gods.⁴⁵ The image of the goodly gods I have presented here could very well explain how the nursing babes in Ps 8:3a are connected to Yahweh's harassers, enemies, and vengeful ones (מתנקם) in Ps 8:3b.

45. It may be worth noting here that צרר also means bind, tie up, or be restricted, considering the need for the goodly gods of *CAT 1.23* to be restricted to the desert for seven years (see *CAT 1.23* ll. 65-67 in the next section on the priestly figure). However, in order for this meaning to apply in Ps 8, the verb would have to be passive, and the text would have to be amended to something like a Pual participle (cf. Jos 9:4). Perhaps it is possible the prefixed נ of the passive participial form was dropped when the reference to the goodly gods was misunderstood by the scribe, henceforth omitting the reference to the "bound ones," but this is highly speculative.

Section 2.1.3: The Priestly Figure and Humanity's Service to Defeat Cosmic Foes

After the display of devouring the birds of the sky and the fish of the sea and presumably everything in between in lines 61-64, "El commands the gods to search for food in the wilderness."⁴⁶

"O wives whom I wed,
O sons whom I sire,
Raise an offering in the holy desert,
There sojourn mid rock and brush."
Seven years complete,
Eight cycles full,
The gracious gods roam the steppe,
They hunt the desert fringe. (ll. 64-68)

After the goodly gods are portrayed as cosmic foes who threaten all the animals in the cosmos, El sentences them to the desert. After seven years in the desert, the threat of their appetite is appeased by a priestly figure referred to in the text as the "Guard of the sown."

They approach the Guardian of the sown,
They cry out to the Guardian of the sown.
"O Guardian, Guardian, open!"
He opens a breach for them,
They enter (and say):
"If [there is b]read [...,]
Then gi[ve] that we may eat,"
If there is [wine....]
Then give that we may drink,"
The Guardian of the sown answers,
["there is bread for him who comes]
"There is wine for him who enters[...]"
He approaches his flask of wine [...,]
His companion is full of wine [...]⁴⁷ (ll. 68-76)

46. Parker, *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, 213.

47. Translation in Parker, *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, 214.

According to Mark Smith, this guard of the sown region at the conclusion of the text is the same priestly figure introduced in the opening lines of the text. *CTA 1.23* begins with the first-person voice of this priest, invoking the goodly gods. Lines 1-7 and 23-29 form an inclusio in the first section of *CTA 1.23* and establish the role of this guard/priestly figure.⁴⁸

Let me invite the Goo[dly] Gods
Indeed, the beautiful ones, sons of . . .
Those given offerings on high . . .
In the outback, on the heights
to their heads . . .
Eat of every food,
and drink of every vintage wine. Peace, O King! Peace, O Queen!
O enterers and guards! (ll. 1-7).

Let me invite the Goodly Gods,
[Ravenous pair of day old] day-old [boys],
Who suck the nipple(s) of Athirat's breast(s)
Shapshu braids their branches (?),
[...] and grapes.
Peace, O enterers and guards,
who process with goodly sacrifice.
"The field is {the field} of El/the gods,
Field of Athirat and Rahmay. (ll. 23-29)

Mark Smith says "the priest behind line 1 who invites the gods to eat and drink wine in line 6 structurally corresponds to the 'Guard of the sown' [ll. 68-76] who allows the goodly gods to enter and partake of the food and wine produced by the sown."⁴⁹ The actions of the priest in lines 68-76 (corresponding to ll. 1-7//23-29) finally quench the insatiable appetites/thirst of the goodly gods.

According to Mark Smith, the first section of *CAT 1.23* (ll. 1-29) represent a series

48. Following translations by Smith, *The Rituals and Myths*, 19-21.

49. Smith, *The Rituals and Myths*, 33.

of ritual actions, framed by the invocation of the priest, “Let me invite.” The connection between the priest and what may be viewed as rituals contained in lines 1-29 correspond to the myth in lines 30-76, in which the El’s wives conceive and give birth, offerings to El’s astral family are made, the goodly gods exhibit ferocious appetites, El remands them to the desert, and the priest finally satiates them.⁵⁰ The relationship between the rituals and invocations of the priest in lines 1-29 and the myth in lines 30-76 might suggest a ritual in Ugarit that involved food and drink offerings to satisfy the destructive forces that threatened the vitality of produce—plant and animal alike. Mark Smith writes, “The ritual lines of 1-7//23-27 is focused on the solution to the hungrily destructive gods in lines 30-76, and the various, additional components comport with this general picture.”⁵¹

The role of the Ugaritic priest in *CAT I.23* may help explain how the psalmist imagined assisting Yahweh in his power/victory over cosmic foes in that this Ugaritic text provides an image of a priestly figure ending the threat of what the author of Ps 8 may have considered a cosmic foe of Yahweh. In *CAT I.23*, El sentences his newborn destructive children to the desert for seven years, but it is the (presumably) human priestly figure performing the Ugaritic rituals who satisfies the threat of the mouths of the goodly gods. If the goodly gods were imagined as cosmic foes with the potential to threaten Yahweh and his creation (esp. animals, e.g., birds of the air and fish of the sea), then the priestly figure of *CAT I.23* provides an example of a human agent who acts in the service of the deity’s power (in the Ugaritic context, El’s power) over cosmic/mythic

50. Smith, *The Rituals and Myths*, 146.

51. Smith, *The Rituals and Myths*, 150.

agents of chaos. If the author of Ps 8 was familiar with this Ugaritic mytheme, then the role of the guard of the sown may have motivated the psalmist to incorporate the image of these nursing new born deities in Ps 8:3, as it provides a possible parallel example where a priestly figure served in the power/victory over cosmic foes.

Section 2.1.4: Summary of Psalm 8 and CAT 1.23

If we turn to *CAT 1.23* to help explain the image of nursing babes, three parallels between Ps 8 and *CAT 1.23* emerge. (1) In *CAT 1.23* offerings are made to luminaries, and in Ps 8 Yahweh creates the luminaries. (2) In *CAT 1.23* the goodly gods seek to consume birds of the air and fish of the sea, and in Ps 8 humans are being made to rule over the birds of the air and the fish of the sea. (3) In *CAT 1.23*, first person language is used from a priest-like figure whose actions satisfy the threat of the newborn deities, while in Ps 8 first person language is used to describe the psalmist's desire to serve Yahweh's heavenly power/victory. While these are two very different texts, the similarities suggest it is conceivable the author of Ps 8 could have been familiar with these motifs from *CAT 1.23*. I am not suggesting a direct link between the two texts, but these parallel mythemes are suggestive of a possible relationship between them.

How does this understanding of Ps 8:3 help explain the psalmist's desire to serve Yahweh's power/victory in Ps 8:2b? Understanding Ps 8:3 as a reference to the goodly gods, in the context of Ps 8:2b (as I have argued above), provides a much more intelligible and sequential understanding of Ps 8:2-3 than common translations that

understand the image of nursing babes as a reference to human babies.

- 2) Yahweh our Lord,
How majestic is your name over all the earth!
May I serve your heavenly power/victory!
- 3) Away from the mouths of nursing babes,
you have established a stronghold because of your harassers,
to stop the foe and the avenger.
- 4) For I see your heavens, the works of your fingers,
moon and stars, which you affixed.
- 5) What is humankind that you remember it,
or a son of humanity that you appointed him,
- 6) that you made them a little less than God?
And you will crown them with glory and majesty!
- 7) You will make them rule over the works of your hands;
you put everything underneath their feet,
- 8) Sheep and cattle, all of them,
even the beasts of the field,
- 9) birds of the air and fish of the sea
the one who crosses the paths of the seas
- 10) Yahweh our Lord
How majestic is your name over all the earth!

Following the proclamation of Yahweh's majestic name over all the earth, the first-person voice of the psalmist states a desire to serve Yahweh's heavenly power/victory, presumably in the sense that the orator wishes to ensure that Yahweh's majestic name remains supreme. If the psalmist is going to play a role in maintaining Yahweh's majestic heavenly power, the mouths of nursing babes—that is the goodly gods—provides an example of how the psalmist might do this in a priest-like context. Hypothetically, the insatiable mouths of the goodly gods would have the potential to threaten Yahweh's power and the majesty of his name over all the earth. In *CAT 1.23*, El exerts power over the goodly gods and their ravenous appetites by banishing them to the desert, and the priestly figure serves El's power by finishing what he started and ending the threat of

goodly gods' mouths with an offering. In Ps 8:3 the mouths of the goodly gods provide an example whereby the deity and the priest work together to put an end to the cosmic threat.⁵² On account of these harassers, Yahweh's strength is established. Putting a stop to the foe and the avenger ensures the majesty of Yahweh's name over all the earth. Yahweh's power/majesty is further exemplified by his creation of the luminaries in Ps 8:4, which are honored as deities in *CAT 1.23*. Next, verses 5-7 reflect on Yahweh's appointment of humanity to rule over Yahweh's creation, which justifies the psalmist's proclamation in Ps 8:2b, especially in the face of the the goodly gods who threaten the animals that humanity is meant to rule over in Ps 8:8-9.

This explanation of Ps 8, and the imagery of verse 3, sheds light on what we might call the *chaoskampf* of Ps 8. Whereas Ps 74:12-17 mythologizes Yahweh's creation of the world and the separation of the waters in Gen 1:6-7, I would suggest that Ps 8 mythologizes the creation of plants and animals, along with the duty of humanity to exercise dominion over the created order as images of Yahweh. The mouths of the עוללים in Ps 8 introduce the struggle between Yahweh and the forces of chaos that must be put to rest in order for creation to flourish.⁵³

52. This introduces the imagined role of the psalmist, possibly serving Yahweh in a priestly capacity, with the belief that these priestly functions have cosmic implications. This idea will be developed in chapters 2 and 3.

53. This is a common theme in the Psalms. For example, see Richard Clifford, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible* (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1994), 151-62. However, even if every paring of עוללים and ינקים in the Hebrew Bible refers to humans and never enemies or supernatural beings (Alastair G. Hunter, *Psalms* (London: Routledge, 1999), 120-121.), it seems more likely to suggest that this is a reference to divine combat—a much more commonplace theme in the Hebrew Bible. In addition, if I can sufficiently argue, by the conclusion of this thesis, that Ps 8 declares humanity's desire to play a role in or serve in the outcome of the divine struggle against chaos, then a possible reference to the goodly gods here appears even more reasonable.

Section 2.2: From the Mouths (מפי)

As mentioned above, some associate the phrase “from the mouths of babes” as an expression of singing or praising Yahweh. Closer examination, however, shows this expression is not used to refer to the praise of Yahweh, as common translations of Ps 8 understand the phrase. The phrase “from the mouth” is often used to refer to the mouth of various threats, including Leviathan, lions, and even Yahweh himself (1 Sam 17:34-35; 2 Sam 22:9; Job 5:15; Pss 18:9; 22:22; 36:16; 37:1-3; 41:11, 13; Jer 51:44; Ezek 34:10; Hos 2:19; Joel 1:5; Amos 3:12; Zech 9:7). It also appears in the context of prophetic dictation and prophetic messages, words/messages/warnings from Yahweh, promises, instruction from priests, eating, the act of remembering, and various speech acts. The closest the phrase comes to referring to praise is in Deut 31:21, in which the Israelites were to remember the song that Moses taught them, “it will not be lost from the mouths of their descendants.”⁵⁴

Job uses the phrase מפי to draw attention to the mouth of Yahweh’s cosmic foe,

Leviathan:

Who can open the doors of its face?

There is terror all around its teeth. (Job 41:14)

54. Even though the phrase “from the mouth,” along with the context of Ps 8 in which Yahweh defeats his enemies points to a negative meaning. Images of babies and nurslings are also positive in the Old Testament. The word נק appears twice in the song of Moses, in the context of nursing Jacob (32:13) and in an image of all people young and old that Yahweh had at one time thought to destroy (32:25). In these instances nursing babes could refer to the generations that Yahweh might prosper in the promised land. See Num 11:12, “Did I conceive all this people? Did I give birth to them, that you should say to me, ‘Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries a sucking child, to the land that you promised on oath to their ancestors?’” The image of Yahweh’s establishment of his people in a place of strength as nurslings also appears in Isa 60:16; 66:11, 12. In these texts, the images of nurslings are mostly positive; however, the use of “from the mouths of” in Ps 8, combined with the imagery of Yahweh’s establishing of a stronghold and defeating enemies, signals the threat that Yahweh must establish a stronghold against.

Its sneezes flash forth light,
and its eyes are like the eyelids of dawn.
From its mouth (מפיו) go flaming torches;
sparks of fire leap out.
Out of its nostrils comes smoke,
as from a boiling pot and burning rushes.
Its breath kindles coals,
and a flame comes out of its mouth (מפיו). (Job 41:18-21)

Given this example (and the others cited above), we might read the mouths of nursing babes as an image of threat rather than an image of praise or infant speech.

In the previous section I argued that in Ps 8:2b the psalmist desires to serve Yahweh's heavenly power/victory. If this new understanding is correct, then we might expect verse 3 to explain the kind of heavenly power/victory the psalmist has in mind. The rest of Ps 8:3, following the nursing baby imagery, provides clues: "you have established a stronghold on account of your harassers, to stop the foe and the avenger." If the psalmist is proclaiming a desire to serve Yahweh's power/victory, Ps 8:3b may suggest that the psalmist desires to serve Yahweh's power/victory "to stop the foe and the avenger."

It is not clear how literal nursing babes might fit within the context of Yahweh's power/victory over enemies. However, if we understand the phrase "from the mouth" (מפיו) to signal a threat, the potential parallel with the goodly gods of *CAT 1.23* could explain how Ps 8:3a fits with the rest of the verse. The "goodly gods" of the Ugaritic text *CAT 1.23* are newborn deities, depicted with threatening/all consuming mouths, and referred to as the "ones who nurse" (*ynqm* in Ugaritic).⁵⁵ In the Ugaritic

55. Smith, "Ps 8:2b-3," 639. Also see his commentary on this Ugaritic text: *The Rituals and Myths of the feast of the Goodly Gods*.

myth, they are regarded as “cosmic foes, known also to be children of the god El, [who] devour all the beasts of the cosmos and are remanded to the desert . . . until they are allowed into the sown region.”⁵⁶ The primary threat of the goodly gods comes from their mouths, which are depicted nearly identically to that of the god Mot (“Death”). The description of Mot in the Baal Cycle, text 11 II 2-3, “[One lip to He]ll, one lip to Heaven, [a to]ngue to the Stars” is very similar to the description of goodly gods in *CAT 1.23* lines 61-62, “One lip to earth, the other to the sky.”⁵⁷ This imagery describes the boundless appetites of the deities. If the author of Ps 8 was aware of this mytheme, then the mouths of the nursing babes in Ps 8:3 should be understood as a threatening image, adapted by the psalmist to represent cosmic foes of Yahweh. If this is the case, the expression “from the mouths of nursing babes”⁵⁸ would represent the threat that must be dealt with in order to establish strength, or a “stronghold/strong place” (יִסְדַּת עֵז). However, if Yahweh (and possibly humanity, cf. Ps 8:2b) must deal with the threat from the mouths of the goodly gods to establish strength (יִסְדַּת עֵז), it is not readily clear what this means.

Section 2.3: The Meaning of יִסְדַּת עֵז

I will clarify the meaning of this expression in two stages. (1) The use of יִסַּד in Ps 8:3 is similar to other texts in which Yahweh forms the heavens and the earth. In several

56. Smith, “Ps 8:2b-3,” 639.

57. Translations from Parker, *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, 143 and 213 respectively.

58. Here I am reading מפי עוללים וינקים as a hendiadys, instead of “from the mouths of babes and nurslings.”

places where the Old Testament describes Yahweh's establishment of the world with the word יסד, the creation of the heavens also appears in tandem. The verbs כון and יסד are sometimes paired together to describe Yahweh's placement of the (כון) luminaries in the sky his establishment (יסד) of the earth as they appear in Ps 8:3-4. In other instances, the world is established (יסד) in parallelism with the creation of the heavens as the works of Yahweh's hands/fingers (again, cf. Ps 8:3-4). (2) The verb יסד is used to describe the establishment of the world via the defeat of chaotic/cosmic foes by the עז of Yahweh.

Section 2.3.1: Establishment (יסד) of the Earth and Creation of the World/Heavens

In Ps 89:3 Yahweh's faithfulness is as firm [תכן] as the heavens. In Ps 89:12 the world and all that is in it is established by Yahweh (יסדתם). Here in Ps 89 the verbs כון and יסד are both used in the same context to describe the creation of the earth and the heavens, as in Ps 8:3-4. Psalm 24:2 reads, "for he has founded it [יסדה] on the seas, and established it [יכננה] on the rivers." Here, both references are to earthy features, but יסד and כון appear together in the context of creation. Psalm 102:26 does not have the verb כון but does say that Yahweh יסד the earth, in parallelism with the heavens as the work of Yahweh's hands (cf. "works of your fingers" in Ps 8:4). "Long ago you laid the foundation of the earth,

and the heavens are the work of your hands” (Ps 102:26).⁵⁹ Proverbs 3:19 provides a clear example of כּוֹן, establishing the heavens, and יסד, establishing the earth: “The Lord by wisdom founded (יסד) the earth; by understanding he established (כוֹן) the heavens.” Isaiah 51:3 does not use כּוֹן in relation to the heavens, but the earth is established (יסד) in combination with the creation of the heavens (cf. Ps 78:69; Amos 9:6; Zech 12:1; Job 38:4-13). These examples show how יסד is being used to describe the creation of the world in Ps 8:3, in relationship to Ps 8:4, in which the psalmist marvels at the works of Yahweh’s fingers, the moon and stars that he affixed (כוֹנְנָה) in the heavens. However, Ps 8 does not say that Yahweh establishes the earth (e.g., אָרֶץ). In Ps 8:3, Yahweh establishes strength (יסדה עז). Now that we have a context for the use of יסד in reference to Yahweh’s creation of the world, the meaning of the phrase יסדה עז can be explained by the use of the verb יסד in relationship to examples of chaoskampf in the Old Testament, in which יסד and עז (or the verb form עזז) appear together.

59. This psalm also points to an alternative image that I might speculatively suggest as a second option for the nursing babes in Ps 8:3—that Yahweh is the progenitor of future generations of Israelites. See Ps 102:26-29 (NRSV),

Long ago you laid the foundation [יסדת] of the earth,
and the heavens are the work of your hands.
They will perish, but you endure;
they will all wear out like a garment.
You change them like clothing, and they pass away;
but you are the same, and your years have no end.
The children of your servants shall live secure;
their offspring shall be established [יכוֹן] in your presence.

In this view, the strength that Yahweh establishes would be a symbol of the prosperity of future generations. This text, in which יסד and כּוֹן appear together, shows how Yahweh’s establishment of the created order is tied to the establishment of the “children of [his] servants” and “their offspring.” Psalm 102:26-29 does not contain a reference to nurslings but might help show how the phrase יסדה עז might be linked with this concept.

Another example of יסד in this sense might be Isa 14:32, in which Yahweh founds Zion as a place where his people might find refuge. Other ways in which future generations are established using יסד include: Isa 28:16, 48:13, 54:11-13; Zech 8:9. Because I am also arguing for a priestly influence for Ps 8, the many instances in which יסד refers to the establishment and or rebuilding of the temple may be relevant here as well, when the context orients the reader to a prosperous image of Israel for generations to come. These examples might suggest, as I will show in chapter 3, that Ps 8 could have taken on this later meaning in postexilic communities, in which the people longed for the rebuilding of the temple and the re-stabilization of Israel.

Section 2.3.2: יסדת עז and Chaoskampf

The word pair of יסדת עז in Ps 8:3 does not appear elsewhere in the Old Testament; however, the two words do appear in close proximity in the context of conflict with cosmic foes and the establishment of creation. One example of this is Isa 51:9-16. In Isa 51:9-10, the author calls on Yahweh to act as he did in the exodus by invoking Yahweh to put on strength (לבשי־עז) and by mythologizing the exodus as Yahweh's defeat of Rahab.

Awake, awake, put on strength (לבשי־עז),
O arm of the Lord!
Awake, as in days of old,
the generations of long ago!
Was it not you who cut Rahab in pieces,
who pierced the dragon?
Was it not you who dried up the sea,
the waters of the great deep;
who made the depths of the sea a way
for the redeemed to cross over?

Isaiah 51:11 connects this mythologizing of the exodus to the return to Zion. Isaiah 51:12-16 follows with assurances that this will happen because it is Yahweh who established the earth in verses 13 and 16 (יסד ארץ). In this text, putting on עז is a precondition for Yahweh's defeat of the cosmic foe Rahab. Immediately after this, Yahweh's power is further exemplified by his work to establish (יסד) the earth.⁶⁰

Psalms 89:10-13 even more clearly associates the establishment (יסד) of the world and Yahweh's עז. In Ps 89:13, the verb form of the noun is used (עזו).

You crushed Rahab like a carcass;

⁶⁰ In Isa 14:32, Yahweh establishes Zion, where the needy can take refuge.

you scattered your enemies with your mighty arm.
 The heavens are yours, the earth also is yours;
 the world and all that is in it—you have founded them [יסדתם].
 The north and the south[c]—you created them;
 Tabor and Hermon joyously praise your name.
 You have a mighty arm;
 strong is [תעוז] your hand, high your right hand.

This use of יסד and עז coheres with the image in Ps 8:3 in that Yahweh's victory over cosmic foes is connected to the establishment of the world and the strength required to do so. The author of Ps 8 poetically condenses the concept that Yahweh יסדת ארץ by defeating cosmic foes via עז into one two-word statement, יסדת עז. If we read the goodly gods in Ps 8:3, then presumably Yahweh has established עז by putting an end to the threat of the mouths of the goodly gods.

Psalm 104 does not explicitly connect יסד to the establishment of creation against the threat of cosmic foes or the word עז, but יסד is used in verses 5-9 to describe the creation of the world in a combative sense.

You set [יסד] the earth on its foundations,
 so that it shall never be shaken.
 You cover it with the deep as with a garment;
 the waters stood above the mountains.
 At your rebuke they flee;
 at the sound of your thunder they take to flight.
 They rose up to the mountains, ran down to the valleys
 to the place that you appointed for them.
 You set [יסדת] a boundary that they may not pass,
 so that they might not again cover the earth.

Psalm 104 illustrates how יסד is used to describe the way in which Yahweh creates the world as a stable place. Yahweh stabilizes the earth by setting it “on its foundations, so that it shall never be shaken.” Yahweh rebukes the fleeing waters and establishes their

boundaries to prevent them from destabilizing the earth and covering it again.

Presumably, these actions establish the world in such a way that Leviathan becomes Yahweh's plaything (Ps 104:26). When compared with Ps 8:3 (and the goodly gods of *CAT 1.23*), this would suggest that when Yahweh *עו יסדת*, he established strength on earth in such a way that the goodly gods (and other threats) would not be able to destabilize the created order.

If Ps 8 is drawing upon the image of the goodly gods in *CAT 1.23*, it is still a rare occurrence, just as an image of human babies praising Yahweh would also be rare. Even though this might be the only possible reference to the newborn ravenous gods of *CAT 1.23* in the Old Testament, the use of *מפי* and the expression *עו יסדת*, in combination with the defeat of enemies in Ps 8:3bc and creation of the luminaries in Ps 8:4, are highly suggestive that the nurslings refer to enemies of Yahweh, not human babies. Both options—a possible reference to nursing “babies” from *CAT 1.23* and a reference to literal babies perhaps praising, or somehow participating in Yahweh's acts in creation—seem unparalleled in the Old Testament. However, the tradition in which Yahweh defeats chaotic foes in order to establish creation is pervasive in the Old Testament.⁶¹ This is one of the traditions in which Ps 8 functions.

If the expression *מפי* signifies the threat Yahweh must deal with in order to establish (*יסד*) creation in Ps 8, then it is likely the nursing babes in Ps 8 are a reference to the goodly gods of *CAT 1.23*. If we understand *אשרתנה הודך על השמים* to mean may I serve your power/victory in the heavens, the *עוללים וינקים* provide an example of the enemies

61. Bernard Batto, *Slaying the Dragon: Mythmaking in the Biblical Tradition* (Louisville: John Knox, 1992).

Yahweh, and possibly humanity, must defeat in order to stabilize the created order. Given the themes shared between Ps 8 and *CAT 1.23*, the image of the threat signaled by the phrase מפי, and the chaoskampf associations with the phrase יסדת עז, it seems most likely to me that the nursling imagery in Ps 8 refers to the goodly gods. These conclusions also strengthen my claim that Ps 8:2b expresses the Psalmist's desire to participate in the heavenly power/victory of Yahweh.⁶² Psalm 8:6-7 and Ps 8:8-9 describe Yahweh's appointment of humanity to participate in this struggle against chaos and the management of the created order.

Section 3: Now-But-Not-Yet Dominion in Psalm 8:6-7

The psalmist's desire to serve Yahweh in Ps 8:2 draws more attention to humanity's appointment and dominion in Ps 8:5-7. The four verbs in the MT's Ps 8:6-7 are not always addressed in commentaries. Many interpreters do not acknowledge the varying verb forms and translate them all as preterites, without noting the imperfect forms.⁶³ The sequence is *waw*-consecutive-imperfect, imperfect (v. 6), and imperfect, perfect (v. 7). At first glance, someone might assume the verbal aspect sequence of these verbs is complete, incomplete, incomplete, complete. However, translation of Hebrew verbs in respect to time does not always follow the standard patterns, especially in poetry.

62. I will unpack how the psalmist may have conceived of participating in Yahweh's struggle against chaotic foes in chapters 2 and 3.

63. The following works do not mention the varying verb forms in Ps 8:6-7 and translate them with completed time. Nahum M. Sarna, *Songs of the Heart: An Introduction to the Book of Psalms* (New York: Schocken Books, 1993), 52-67. Arthur Weiser, *The Psalms: A Commentary*. A. A. Anderson, *Psalms 1-72*. Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 1-59*.

It is likely that in early Hebrew there was a prefixed form (resembling the standard imperfect verb in the MT) that conveyed completed action. These forms are more common to Ugaritic but apparently survive in early Hebrew. Because of this, translators consider the dating of texts when a verb that appears as a standard imperfect could or should be translated in respect to completed time. In these cases, context is also a factor in determining the translation of the verbal aspect. The difficulty of using these methods increases while translating the poetry of the psalms, where date and context are much more difficult to determine. In light of this difficulty, Peter Craigie writes that if תעטר and תמשיל were intended to convey completed time,

the prefixed forms . . . would originally have been distinguished from the normal so-called imperfect by both vocalization and stress (neither of which were retained in the transmission of the consonantal text, and which were therefore not represented in the vocalization of the Massoretes), and the poet's choice of verbal forms may have been determined by such features as phonetic considerations and meter (neither of which can be detected with certainty in light of the extant evidence).⁶⁴

Craigie does not translate the imperfects as preterite because Ps 8's dating is unclear and he considers the context ambiguous. Instead, Craigie follows the New English Bible's translation and proposes a chiasmic structure of the four verbs (past, future, future, past) in order to support the idea that the human "role is not static, but requires continuous human response and action."⁶⁵

Craigie may be failing to properly consider Ps 8's context and the common understanding that there is some kind of relationship between Gen 1 and Ps 8 in their

64. Craigie, *World Biblical Commentary*, 113.

65. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 105, 108.

descriptions of creation and humanity's dominion over animals.⁶⁶ If this is the case, this context would make it reasonable to translate so-called primordial events in completed time. This potential oversight highlights how disagreements over context and dating complicate the translation of verbs in respect to time, especially in poetry.

Jan Joosten draws attention to the difficulty of translating verbs in Hebrew poetry by pointing out that “poems are not, like prose texts, governed by notions of temporal or logical sequence. They typically are guided to a large extent by mood, feeling, and intuition.”⁶⁷ Joosten also explains that context is problematic for determining verbal aspect in Hebrew poetry. He says,

the context does not provide the same type of guidance as in prose texts: while narrative texts will usually observe continuity of reference time, and expressly mark any digressions from it, poetry may jump from past to present to future, and vice versa, in seemingly anarchic fashion. Similarly, whereas discursive texts will often develop a progression from what is given to what is desired, poems may mix the factual with the imaginary in very different ways. Concretely, this means that one half of a poetic verse may refer to the past while the other half refers to the future; one may express modality, the other deontic. Any combination of verbal functions may be envisaged.⁶⁸

This excerpt from Joosten's chapter on Hebrew verbal usage in poetry illustrates what may be happening in Ps 8 and what Craigie calls a verbal chiasm—half of each verse may refer to past and the other to future. On the other hand, in the previous section, I argued that the author of Ps 8 was familiar with the Ugaritic mythemes in *CAT 1.23*. If this is the case, then perhaps it is reasonable to suggest that the YIQTOL forms in Ps 8

66. I will address the relationship between Gen 1 and Ps 8 in chapter 2.

67. Jan Joosten, *The Verbal System of Biblical Hebrew: A New Synthesis Elaborated on the Basis of Classical Prose*, Jerusalem Biblical Studies, 10; Jerusalem: Simor, 2012), 414.

68. Joosten, *The Verbal System in Biblical Hebrew*, 414.

are preterite, as they often appear in Ugaritic. However, Joosten says its also possible that these forms appear not because the text is early but because the author wanted the text to seem early. According to Joosten, some of “the instances of preterite YIQTOL in poetry are not meant to express the usual meaning of the form, but to recall ancient usage and lend texts an archaic ring.”⁶⁹ He bases this on examples of texts that appear late but contain YIQTOL forms that clearly refer to Israel’s past. This could be the case with Ps 8, but Ps 8 also appears to be mythologizing the creation of the universe and Israel’s origins as much as it is describing what might be considered historical actions. It is also important to consider that when these so-called archaic forms appear, one might still argue that the YIQTOL forms should retain a sense of process or ongoing action even if the action is understood to have originated in the past.⁷⁰ I think its possible a combination of these influences could be at work in Ps 8, but it is difficult to say with any certainty. Perhaps some words were chosen to give the text an “archaic ring,” as Joosten says. Perhaps these imperfect forms belong to these archaic preterite types or intimate a sense of a completed action that took place over time. Perhaps, they should be read as standard imperfects as Craigie suggests. In order to determine the translation of these verbs and the meaning of Ps 8:6-7, we must return to the context of the psalm.

The arguments I have made thus far for Ps 8:1-4 suggest that Ps 8 is not just referring to historical/primordial events in which Yahweh creates the world and commissions humanity. Rather, the psalmist is proclaiming a desire to serve Yahweh in a

69. Joosten, *The Verbal System in Biblical Hebrew*, 430.

70. Joosten, *The Verbal System in Biblical Hebrew*, 429-30.

way that seems new or at least in progress, with the statement “may I serve.” The author of Ps 8 may have wanted to give the poem an “archaic ring” and, at the same time, to convey a sense of action in progress or future action. While Craigie’s argument seems to rely on uncertainty of dating/context and theological concept, the context I have described above for Ps 8:1-4 supports the verbal chiasm in verses 6-7, rendering תעטרֶהוּ and תמשִׁילֶהוּ with a sense of ongoing action—if not in a future sense, than at least in a progressive or habitual-iterative action.⁷¹

In the previous sections, I have shown that the author of Ps 8 wants to serve the heavenly power/victory of Yahweh in the struggle against cosmic foes. This rare sentiment intimates that the completeness of humanity’s God-given dominion has not been fully realized. That is, it seems rare or even impossible that humans would actually participate in Yahweh’s combat with foes of chaos. Psalm 89:25 may provide an example of Yahweh’s anointed king imagined participating in combat against cosmic foes if “sea” and “rivers” are understood as watery chaos monsters: “I will set his hand on the Sea, and his right hand on the Rivers.”⁷² However, the context describes this king as a royal ideal and exalted Davidic descendant—not a typical human, as the word אָנוּשׁ communicates in Ps 8:5. The bold declaration of Ps 8:2b seems to suggest, then, that the ability of humans to participate in Yahweh’s struggle against chaos is something new, sought after, or not completely realized. If we translate Ps 8:2b “may I serve your heavenly power/victory,”

71. For example, Robert Alter, *The Book of the Psalms* (New York: Norton, 2007). J. W. Rogerson, *Psalms 1-50* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977). Charles Augustus Briggs and Emilie Grace Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of the Psalms* (ICC 1; New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1906), 1.61.

72. This understanding of Ps 89 will be discussed in chapter 2.

this statement communicates perhaps an obvious truth: that humans do not have complete dominion over all things because humans are not God. However, the author of Ps 8 is in awe of the fact that humans are a “little less than God” and seeks to fulfill this notion by serving the heavenly power/victory of Yahweh in the ongoing struggle against chaos.⁷³

In chapter 2, I will explore this point further and explain how Ps 8 may be participating in the same tradition as Isa 55:3, in which “the king is taken as a model for every individual, and what was once predicated of the king is now applied more generally.”⁷⁴ If this is the case, then the author of Ps 8, considering Ps 89:25 (in which the psalmist imagined the Davidic king participating in divine combat), may begin to wonder if this is now the “model for every individual.” This would certainly be a startling development, one that would cause the author of Ps 8 to view the crowning of humanity as an increased level of divinity (“a little less than God”) and one that might cause the author to proclaim “may I serve your heavenly power/victory.” The notion in Ps 8 that Yahweh might be appointing humanity in a new way causes me to ultimately follow Craigie’s rendering and translate תעטרֶהוּ and תמשִׁילֶהוּ as future actions.

The now-but-not-yet quality of the verbal chiasm also supports the idea that the psalmist desires to be a participant in Yahweh’s now-but-not-yet victory against cosmic foes (e.g., cf. Isa 27 and Ps 104). In Ps 8, it may be difficult to imagine the psalmist’s proclaiming a desire to participate in the divine combat against chaos. With the verbal chiasm, the bold wish of the psalmist to serve Yahweh’s heavenly power/victory in Ps

73. The manner in which the psalmist expects to serve will be explained in chapters 2 and 3 of the thesis.

74. J. J. M. Roberts, “The Enthronement of YHWH and David: The Abiding Theological Significance of the Kingship Language of the Psalms,” *CBQ* 64 (2002): 684.

8:5-7 is more palatable because it associates this unusual request with a kind of eschatological vision.

מה־אנוש כִּי־תִזְכְּרֵנוּ וּבֶן־אָדָם כִּי תִפְקְדֵנוּ
וּתְחַסְרֵהוּ מֵעַט מֵאֱלֹהִים וְכָבוֹד וְהַדָּר תַּעֲטֶרְהוּ
תִּמְשִׁלֵּהוּ בַּמַּעֲשֵׂי יָדֶיךָ כֹּל שֶׁתָּחַת תַּחֲתִּירְגִּלּוֹ

What is humanity that you remember it,
or a son of humanity that you appointed him,
that you made them a little less than God?
And you will crown them with glory and majesty!
You will make them rule over the works of your hands;
you put everything underneath his feet.

First, the psalmist is humbled that Yahweh has appointed humans, creating them a little less than God. Then, the psalmist turns his focus to a point in the future when Yahweh will crown humans with glory and majesty to rule over the works of Yahweh's hands. However, at the same time, everything has already been placed under the feet of humanity. How is it that humans have dominion over everything but are still waiting for Yahweh to crown them with glory and majesty to rule over the works of his hands?

This paradoxical stance of the psalmist mirrors Yahweh's relationship to chaos, which Jon Leveson refers to as "the futurity and presence of the cosmogonic victory."⁷⁵ On one hand, Yahweh has subjugated Leviathan and made the agent of chaos his plaything (e.g., Pss 74; 104). On the other hand, Israel longs for the day that Yahweh will do away with his cosmic foes and the suffering they inflict upon creation once and for all (e.g., Isa 27). Yahweh slew chaos in creation, but evil still persists until the day when Yahweh will slay the dragon for good. Levenson writes,

75. This is the title of a chapter in the book. Jon D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 1-182, esp. 26-50. In chapter 3, Levenson's work will help us better understand humanity's role in relationship to Yahweh's ongoing struggle against chaos.

The survival of the tamed agent of chaos, whether imagined as the Sea, Leviathan, or whatever, points to an essential and generally overlooked tension in the underlying theology of these passages. On the one hand, YHWH's unique power to defeat and subjugate his adversary and to establish order is unquestioned. On the other hand, those passages that concede the survival of the defeated enemy raise obliquely the possibility that his defeat may yet be reversed. They revive all the anxiety that goes with the horrific thought. It is true that so long as God continues to exercise his magisterial vigilance and his suzerain fatefulness, the reversal of the defeat of chaos is impossible. But the experience of this world sorely tries the affirmation of this ever vigilant, ever faithful God, and it was in these moments of trial that the unthinkable was thought.⁷⁶

It may have been in a time of such hardship and questioning that the author of Ps 8 proclaimed the majesty and victory of Yahweh throughout the earth and stated his desire to participate in its completion. This theme now be traced back from the beginning of the psalm.

Psalm 8 starts by proclaiming the now-but-not-yet victory of God by first expressing a desire to serve Yahweh's heavenly power/victory in verse 2. Yahweh's lordship is secure, with his name over all the earth, but something about it does not seem complete, causing the psalmist to cry out.

2) Yahweh our Lord,
How majestic is your name over all the earth!
May I serve your heavenly power/victory!

Then in verses 3-4, the psalmist rehearses Yahweh's victory against cosmic foes in the establishment of creation. Yahweh puts an end to comic foes—the enemy and the avenger—in the process of establishing the celestial bodies.

3) From the mouths of nursing babes,
you have established a stronghold against your harassers,
to stop the enemy and the avenger.

76. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 17-18.

4) For I see your heavens, the works of your fingers,
moon and stars, which you affixed.

In verses 5-7, the psalmist turns to the now-but-not-yet role that humans have to play in that victory. Humans are just a little less than God and are waiting for Yahweh to fully crown them with glory and majesty, to rule over creation more fully than they do in the present, with everything having been placed under their feet. Next, Ps 8:8-9 illustrates the now-but-not-yet nature of humanity's dominion and their ability to serve Yahweh's power/victory over cosmic foes.

Section 4: Psalm 8:8-9 and the One Who Crosses the Paths of the Seas

Verses 8-9 illustrate the now-but-not-yet dominion of humanity by alluding to the watery chaos monster in the list of creatures that humanity is being given dominion over. Verse 9b reads עבר ארצות ימים, which I have translated "the one who crosses the paths of the seas." This reference to a Leviathan-like figure is often translated along the lines of "that which crosses the paths of the seas." Below is my translation of verses 8-9, followed by an explanation and then a summary explanation of my translation of Ps 8.

8) Sheep and cattle, all of them,
even the beasts of the field,
9) birds of the air and fish of the sea
the one who crosses the paths of the seas

Richard Whitekettle suggests that animals in Ps 8:8-9 are listed in order of ascending uncontrollability.⁷⁷ Given the progression of sheep, cattle, and wild beasts in

77. Richard Whitekettle, "Taming the Shrew, Shrike, and Shrimp: The Form and Function of Zoological Classification in Ps 8," *JBL* 125 (2006): 764.

verse 8, it seems intuitive to read the third animal category in verse 9 as more uncontrollable than just whatever passes along the paths of the seas. In verse 8a, צנה and אלפים refer to small and large cattle-like animals, respectively (i.e. domesticated animals). The intensification in 8b follows with שדי בהמות, referring to the wild beasts of the field. Sheep and cattle are animals frequently domesticated by humans. The wild beasts, although it is possible for humans to control them, are more formidable and typically more difficult for humanity to rule over. In verse 9a, birds and fish are certainly more elusive to the clutches of humans than domesticated animals. The intensification of 9b then should complete the intensification of ascending uncontrollability. Similar to the intensification of verse 8 (wild beasts of the field), verse 9b should be understood as the wild beast of the sea. Robert Alter draws attention to the singular active participle עבר in verse 9a: “Interestingly, it is the only active verb in the poem attached to a created thing.”⁷⁸ Alter suggests that the poet uses עבר to express “a teeming vitality, surging through the most inaccessible reaches of the created world, over which man has been appointed to rule,”⁷⁹ as a kind of artistic conclusion. I agree that עבר ארחות ימים represents a power surging through the most inaccessible reaches of the created world but not a “nice intimation”⁸⁰ of flourishing life as he suggests. Rather, עבר ארחות ימים intimates the

78. Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, rev. and updated (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 151.

79. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, 151.

80. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, 151.

most uncontrollable chaotic force in the psalms, the untamed sea monster.⁸¹ Viewing the one who crosses the paths of the seas as personified watery chaos brings into focus the desire of the psalmist to serve Yahweh's heavenly power/victory. The psalmist provides a list of creatures that fit with the verbal chiasm that illustrates humanity's now-but-not-yet dominion in verses 5-7.

This list of animals in ascending uncontrollability reinforces the idea that the psalmist desires to participate in Yahweh's now-but-not-yet victory over cosmic foes and the idea that the actions of God's servants (not only the king but all humans) could have cosmic implications (see chapter 2). This interpretation supports the suggestion that the psalmist might declare "may I serve your heavenly power/victory."

Summary

The author of Ps 8 begins with the now-but-not-yet reign of Yahweh by declaring Yahweh's imperial status (v. 2a) and a desire to help bring about Yahweh's heavenly power/victory (v. 2b). By proclaiming a desire to serve in the victory, the psalmist hints that this universal reign is somehow now-but-not-yet. The proclamation of the psalmist suggests that the battle for final victory is ongoing and may require human participation of some kind. Then in verse 3, the psalmist begins to detail Yahweh's acts in the cosmos

81. The sea crosser in verse 9a may be akin to a whale, perhaps something along the lines of Jonah's massive water creature. Or, the one who crosses the paths of the seas might possibly refer to a creature like Rahab or Leviathan. The Walton Targum actually does insert Leviathan at the end of the list of animals subject to humanity in verses 8-9 (cf. Gen 1:24-25), although this text is of course much later. Francis Moloney, "The Re-interpretation of Psalm VIII and the Son of Man Debate," *NTS* 27 (1981): 664. See also A. A. Anderson, *Psalms 1-72*, 1:104.

—from the consuming mouths of the goodly gods, Yahweh founded a stronghold by putting an end to these harassing foes. As a result, the enemy and the avenger have been put to rest, and creation ensues. Verse 4 describes the development of the stronghold, with Yahweh fixing the stars in the sky. The verbs יָסַד (v. 3) and כָּוַן (v. 4) help emphasize Yahweh stabilizing his created order.⁸² Verse 5 moves from the creation of the heavens to humanity.

From these verses, we can see a progression from cosmic to human in verses 2-5. The psalmist moves from illustrating Yahweh's imperial glory (appearing incomplete due to the psalmist's desire to serve Yahweh's victory), to Yahweh's victory over cosmic foes, allowing creation of celestial bodies, to the creation of humans—the center of the text. This progression down from the heavens to human beings on the ground halts at humanity in verse 5. Verses 5-7 introduce humans and their now-but-not-yet dominion of creation and signal the progression from ground level back up toward the heavens. Verses 8-9 illustrate this progression and hint at the potential fulfillment of the psalmist's desire in verse 2b to serve Yahweh's heavenly power/victory by including an allusion to Leviathan. Verses 8-9 (like the psalmist's declaration in v. 2b) suggest that humanity's dominion, like Yahweh's, is not complete.

This feeling of incompleteness points to the psalmist's presumably difficult circumstances. These bold claims for the participation of humanity in the matters of Yahweh could inspire hope and orient those hearing or reciting the text toward the expectation of an ideal future in times of hardship.

82. Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, 148.

CHAPTER II
THE ADAPTATION OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN AND ISRAELITE IDEAL
ROYAL IDEOLOGIES IN GENESIS 1 AND THEIR SUBLIMATION TO THE
PRIESTHOOD IN PSALM 8

In this chapter, I will first illustrate the ancient Near Eastern ideology in which the king was considered the image and representative of the deity. Second, I will show how both Genesis and Ps 8 appear to be adapting this ideology by applying it to all of humanity in relationship to Yahweh. Third, I will illustrate how the Old Testament sometimes depicts Israelite kings with the potential to function as representatives and mediators of Yahweh, similar to the image-of-god ideology in the ancient Near East. Fourth, I will illustrate how some texts in the Old Testament support the idea that the ability of the king to represent and mediate Yahweh is dependent upon the king's ability to uphold ethical requirements. Fifth, I will show how the imagined role of Yahweh's ideal king was transferred to Israel as a whole, similar to the way Gen 1 and Ps 8 applied the image of god to all humanity. Last, I will summarize how Ps 8 adapted ancient Near Eastern image-of-god ideology in relationship to ideal Israelite royal ideology and sublimated these concepts to a priestly understanding of serving Yahweh as his newly anointed servants.

Image of God in the Ancient Near East

Understanding components of ancient Near Eastern royal ideology in relationship to the designation “image of god” will help us begin to understand the way in which humans are made a little less than God in Ps 8.

In Egypt, the king was sometimes referred to as the image of the deity.

... is the shining image of the lord of all and a creation of the gods of Heliopolis ... [H]e has begotten him, in order to create a shining seed on earth, for salvation for men, as his living image.¹

A prince like Re, the child of Qeb, his heir, the image of Re, whom he created, the avenger (or the representative), for whom he has set himself on earth.²

You are my beloved son, who came forth from my members, my image, whom I have put on earth. I have given to you to rule the earth in peace.³

In Mesopotamian literature, similarly, kings are also sometimes referred to as the image of the deity. In Assyria, the prosperity of the empire and the people in it was deeply connected to the successful role of the king (perhaps as the proper image of the deity). If the king failed to rule successfully, it could mean a lack of prosperity in the land, divine punishment, or the removal of the king (perhaps as an improper image). According to Parpola, Mesopotamian wisdom “defined the position of the king as that of God’s representative on Earth,” and artwork in Assyria portrayed the king as “the perfect

1. D. J. A. Clines, “Humanity as the Image of God,” in *On the Way to the Postmodern: Old Testament Essays, 1967–1998*, vol. 2, ed. D. J. A. Clines, JSOTSup 293 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 478-80.

2. *Ibid.*, 480.

3. *Ibid.*, 480.

image of God.”⁴ Three letters to Esarhaddon refer to the king as the image/perfect likeness of a deity.

The father of the king, my lord, was the very image of Bel, and the king, my lord, is likewise the very image of Bel.⁵

The king, the lord of the world, is the very image of Shamash. He (should) keep in the dark for half a day only.⁶

The well-known proverb says: “Man is a shadow of god.” [But] is man a shadow of man too? The king is the perfect likeness of the god.⁷

Another text addresses an unknown Assyrian king as the image of Marduk.

(the king, my lord) is the [ima]ge of Marduk. The word of (the king), my lord, (is) just as (final) as that of the gods.⁸

In the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic, it says about the king,

... he was cast sublimely from the womb of the gods. It is he who is the eternal image of Enlil, attentive to the people’s voice, the counsel of the land. . . . Enlil exalted him as if he (Enlil) were his (Tukulti-Ninurta’s) own father, right after his firstborn son.⁹

These texts appear to represent the tradition in which the divinely appointed king, who functioned as the representative of the deity, was referred to as the image of the deity.

4. S. Parpola, *Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars*, State Archives of Assyria 10 (Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1993), XV. Simo Parpola, “The Assyrian Tree of Life: Tracing the Origins of Jewish Monotheism and Greek Philosophy.” *JNES* 52 (1993): 161–208.

5. S. Parpola, *Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars*, 181. See also H. Pfeiffer, *State Letters of Assyria: A Transliteration and Translation of 355 Official Assyrian Letters Dating from the Sargonid Period (722-625 B.C.)*, AOS 6, New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1935), 19-20.

6. S. Parpola, *Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars*, 159.

7. S. Parpola, *Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars*, 166. Pfeiffer translates “image of god” here as “A man is as the shadow of god, the slave is as the shadow of a man; but the king, he is like unto the image of god. Robert H. Pfeiffer, *State Letters of Assyria*, American Oriental Series 6 (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1935), 19-20.

8. Steven W. Cole and Peter Machinist, eds. *Letters from Priests to the Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal State Archives of Assyria 13* (Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1998), 43.

9. Benjamin R. Foster, *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature* (Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 2005), 301-2.

While these texts flatter the Assyrian emperor, they seem to reflect an idea that people believed. An Assyrian diagram, known as the Tree of Life, may have been influential in making this flattery more comprehensible and believable. According to Parpola, the Tree of Life served as an imperial theological symbol that worked to legitimize Assyria's power and the king's role in maintaining the "divine world order."¹⁰ The symmetry of the artwork points to the relationship between the deity's role in promoting cosmic order and the king's duty to uphold the created order. Parpola writes, "Consequently, the king who would not conform to the role of the Perfect Man as set out in the Tree and its doctrinal apparatus would automatically, willing or unwillingly, disrupt the cosmic harmony, and with it, the stability of the empire he was commissioned to maintain."¹¹ The king was responsible for ruling ethically, justly, and mercifully, in accordance with the divine mandate.¹² If the king failed to meet these expectations, there were societal, political, and potentially cosmic implications. Even though Parpola's proposal for interpreting the so-called Tree of Life is not widely accepted, many agree that the Tree of Life promoted an understanding of "abundance and security bestowed on the king by the gods and that the king played the role of a regent of the gods on earth."¹³ The idea that the king is the

10. Parpola, *Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars*, XV.

11. Parpola, *Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars*, XVI.

12. Parpola, *Letters from Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars*, XVI.

13. According to Sanae Ito, while Parpola has attempted to argue for a new interpretation of the so-called "Tree of Life," many consider the Assyrian sacred tree an image related to fertilization and possibly Ishtar, the goddess of fertility. However, these images are still considered related to "abundance and security bestowed on the king by the gods and that the king played the role of a regent of the gods on earth." While this seems to be the "mainstream" view, most interpretations still indicate a corresponding relationship between the blessings of the god(s) and the actions of the Assyrian king. Sanae Ito, "Royal Image and Political Thinking in the Letters of Assurbanipal" (PhD diss., University of Helsinki, 2015), 93-94, <http://ezproxy.acu.edu:2052>).

image/representative of the deity and that the king's actions in the created order had implications for the cosmic order is what helps make sense of the author's desire in Ps 8 to participate in Yahweh's victory against cosmic foes. The king, as the image of god (and presumably the speaker in Ps 8) does not have to ascend to heaven to serve the heavenly power/victory of Yahweh. When the image of god acts in step with the deity, the image of god promotes a favorable cosmic result.

Ideally, the imperial rule of the Assyrian king both mirrored and promoted the cosmic and universal rule of the Assyrian deity. The successful imperial rule of Assurbanipal meant success in war and the prosperity of his people. As in some of the "image-of-god" texts cited above, Assurbanipal claims to have been created by the deities. In the Assurbanipal Prism A, he says,

I, Ashurbanipal, the creation of the god Aššur and the goddess Mullissu, the senior son of the king of the House of Succession, the one whom the god Aššur and the god Sîn—the lord of the lunar crown—nominated in distant days to be king and created in the womb of his mother for shepherding Assyria, and the one for whom the deities Šamaš, Adad, and Ištar declared my exercising the kingship through their firm decisions.¹⁴

In the Assurbanipal prisms, he frequently declares his appointment and favor with the gods. In Prism T, Assurbanipal boasts of his favor with the gods, as well as the prosperity and abundance available to the people because of his divine favor and his domination of other lands.

From my childhood until I became an adult, I was assiduous towards the sanctuaries of the great gods. They required my priestly services and they now enjoy my giving them food offerings. The god Adad released his rains and the god Ea opened up his springs. Year after year, I shepherded the subjects of the god Enlil in prosperity and with justice. The great gods, whose divinity I constantly

14. RINAP 5 Asbpl 11, i, 1–7.

revered, generously granted me power, virility, and outstanding strength. They placed lands that had not bowed down to me into my hands and allowed me to achieve my heart's desire.¹⁵

It appears that there is a connection between Assurbanipal's favor with the gods, the prosperity of the people, and his success against those delivered into his hands.

Assurbanipal takes the credit for providing for the people. Because Assurbanipal is successfully carrying out the role of the king as the agent of the deity, he takes the credit for the rain and abundance available to the people. It is as if he has pastured them himself. In this way, the management and prosperity of the created order is dependent upon the king and the king's relationship to the gods. This in turn reinforces the notion of the supreme rule of the Assyrian deities.

This role of the Assyrian king clearly set the king apart from the rest of humanity.

John Van Seters cites a Neo-Babylonian text from the Atrahasis tradition that illustrates this point very well.

Ea began to speak, he directed his word to Belet-ili, "Belet-Ili, Mistress of the great gods, are you. You have created the common people, now construct the king, distinctively superior persons. With goodness envelop his entire being. Form his features harmoniously; make his body beautiful!" Thus did Belet-ili construct the king, distinctively superior persons. The great gods gave the king the task of warfare. Anu gave him the crown; Enlil gave him the throne. Nergal gave him weapons; Ninutta gave him glistening splendor. Belet-ili gave him a beautiful appearance. Nuku gave him instruction and counsel and stands at his service.¹⁶

After creating the "common people," the gods set out to create the kings as "distinctively superior persons." In addition to making the king beautiful/good (a common royal trait in the ancient Near East) and crowning him on the throne, the gods take turns

15. RINAP 5 Asbpl 10, iv 4–18.

16. John Van Seters, "The Creation of Man and the Creation of the King," *ZAW* 101 (1989): 337.

commissioning the king to carry out the work of the deities, giving the king “weapons” and “the task of warfare,” as well as “instruction and counsel.”

This theme of the gods each bestowing the king with different qualities, weapons, and tasks also appears in Assurbanipal’s Coronation Hymn, “Anu gave his crown, Illil gave his throne; Ninurta gave his weapon; Nergal gave his luminous splendour. Nuku sent and placed advisors before him.”¹⁷ These texts highlight the relationship between the king and deities and the king’s duty to enforce the will of the gods. The conclusion of the coronation hymn reinforces this: “Gather, all the gods of heaven and earth, bless king Assurbanipal, the circumspect man! Place in his hand the weapon of war and battle, give him the black-headed people, that he may rule as their shepherd!”¹⁸

A similar theme appears in Egyptian coronation texts. In Horemheb’s accession to the throne, the pantheon (Enneads of the House of Flame) gather to rejoice at the king’s appearance and prepare him for his new role.

the entire Ennead which was before the great shrine [made] acclamations to the height of heaven, rejoicing at the pleasure of Amun, saying; “Behold, Amun has come to the palace, his son in front of him, in order to establish his Crown on his head and to exalt his lifetime like his own! We are gathered together so that we may affix [his crowns] for him and assign to him the insignia of Re and glorify Amun on this account, saying ‘You have brought our protector to us! Give him the jubilees of Re and the years of Horus as King. He is the one who shall do what pleases your heart within Karnak, and likewise in Heliopolis and Hikuptah. He is the one who shall enrich them.’”¹⁹

17. Alasdair Livingstone, *Court Poetry and Literary Miscellanea*, State Archives of Assyria, vol. 3 (Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1989), 27.

18. Alasdair Livingstone, *Court Poetry and Literary Miscellanea*, 27.

19. William J. Murnane, *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 232.

Here, the gods gather to crown and honor the new king, described as the son of Amun—the leading figure of the Egyptian pantheon. The king is described as protector and the one who will enrich the cultic centers of Heliopolis and Hikuptah. After the gods collectively crown the king, the gods assign the king various titles from the deities that correspond to the king’s rule. Here, the king is referred to as “good god,” an epithet for Egyptian kings.

The Great Name(s) of this good god were then made, his titulary being like that of the Person of Re, consisting of: Horus, Mighty Bull, “Whose Counsels are Penetrating,”; Two Ladies, “For Whom Godly signs are Great in Karnak”; Horus of Gold, “contented with Maat, Who Brings the Two Lands back into Being”; King of Upper and Lower Egypt, DJESERKHEPRURE WHOM RE HAS CHOSEN; the Son of Re, HOREMHEB BELOVED OF AMUN, given life.²⁰

I will draw attention to two of these designations. First, “Two Ladies” refers to the “Serpent goddess of Edjo and Buto, as the second of his “great names” and as the figures who stand guard upon his brow.”²¹ Second, Maat (in the title “contented with Maat”) refers to “the goddess, daughter of Re who is identified with the principle of harmony in the cosmos.”²² With the bestowing of these titles, we see how the Egyptian king, like the Assyrian kings in the texts above, were commissioned by the deities and how their enthronement included the notion of being established as one who maintains the cosmic harmony. Donald B. Redford writes,

The king of Egypt was the avatar of the dynastic patron Horus on earth, son of the sun-god . . . Guarantor of the fertility of the land, defector of the forces of chaos,

20. Murnane, *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt*, 232.

21. Murnane, *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt*, 284.

22. Murnane, *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt*, 281.

divine celebrant of the cult, upholder of the universe, Pharaoh towered over creation like some elemental deity descended to earth.²³

These perceived roles of the Egyptian king are in some ways similar to the descriptions of the Assyrian king above. These imagined roles of ancient Near Eastern kings, portrayed as the deities' offspring, help illustrate what the image-of-god ideology likely entailed.²⁴

In the previous chapter, I argued that Ps 8 expresses a desire for humans to participate in Yahweh's struggle with chaos in an effort to help maintain the so-called cosmic harmony. The background I have presented here for ancient Near Eastern kings, as it relates to the image of god, begins to provide a context for understanding the desire of Ps 8 to serve Yahweh's heavenly power/victory. In the next sections on Gen 1 and Ps 8, these texts are illuminating for understanding Ps 8's reappropriation of the image-of-god tradition (also adapted by Gen 1), typically reserved for kings in the ancient Near East. After discussing Gen 1 and Ps 8, we will also see in the following sections how the designation of the king as the "son" or offspring of the deity (mentioned in several of the texts cited above), appears in royal psalms such as Pss 2 and 89.

23. Donald B. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 366. See also, Miroslav Barta, "Egyptian Kingship during the Old Kingdom," in *Experiencing Power, Generating Authority: Cosmos, Politics, and the Ideology of Kingship in Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia*, eds. Jane A. Hill, Philip Jones, and Antonio J. Morales (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2013), 258-59. Barta lists the most prominent roles of ancient Egyptian kingship as follows: 1. to reinforce the preordained world and cosmic order, 2. to link the ruling king to royal ancestors and divine beings, 3. to legitimize the right to rule with deeds appropriate to royalty. In addition, he lists that the "king was considered to be 1. a godly creature begotten by the god (RA), 2. guarantor and keeper of order and the country's unity and prosperity, i.e., of the natural cycle in nature and the world order that came into being as a consequence of the act of creation, 3. mediator between the ordinary mortal people and the gods, 4. messenger and executor of the gods' will and instructions."

24. J. Richard Middleton, *The Liberation Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2005), 108-11.

Genesis 1's Reappropriation of the Image-of-god Tradition

If this is how we understand the Mesopotamian and Egyptian royal ideology as the background for the image-of-god construct, Genesis deploys the designation differently. Genesis does not differentiate the creation of kings from the creation of humanity, and instead of applying the image-of-god designation to kings, Genesis claims that all humans are created in the image of God.

God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. (Gen 1:26-27)

Genesis claims that humankind is created in the image of God, according to God's likeness. This likeness appears to be connected to humankind's dominion over nature, including creatures that occupy sea, air, and land. The designation of the image of God in Genesis also appears to be connected to blessings of fruitfulness and prosperity, in the command "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it." The image of God, again, has something to do with dominion over nature. Verses 29-30 add to the list of created animals, plants yielding seed, trees with seed in its fruit, and every green plant for food.

In Gen 1:26-30, it appears that the author may have intended to add to the Mesopotamian notion that the king was the image of the deity by applying the designation to humanity at large. The first person plural opening statement in Gen 1:26, "let us make humankind," could be related to the number of deities that work together to

form the king in the Atrahasis text cited above.²⁵ Humans then, according to Genesis, could be tasked with mirroring and promoting the cosmic rule of God in creation.

According to Genesis, the rule of humanity has something to do with the management of the animal kingdom and the management of plants for food. Therefore, humans are not only tasked with the ruling of creation, but also with agriculture and the production of food for eating. There may be a similarity here to the Assurbanipal text in which the role of Assurbanipal in relationship to the deities causes the rains to come and the people to prosper. Perhaps Gen 1:26-30 suggests that rains, abundance, and the prosperity of the people depends upon humans fulfilling their roles as images of God. Unlike the Mesopotamian image-of-god tradition, prosperity of the people does not depend on a divinely appointed king as the one and only image of god.²⁶ In Gen 1, prosperity is not mediated by kingship.

Like the texts in the previous section, Gen 1:26-30 creates humans with divinely appointed tasks, with the important difference that this elevated status is bestowed upon all humans, not just kings. Creating all humanity in a way that Atrahasis would consider “distinctly superior” would appear to elevate the status of human beings in the ancient Near East. A significant difference between these texts, however, is that אלהים in Genesis is presented as a singular deity. If these texts are related, I do not think there is a direct literary connection. Rather, the mytheme of a group of deities gathering to prepare and

25. Van Seters, “The Creation of Man and the Creation of the King,” 341.

26. See, for example, David J. A. Clines, “The Image of God in Man.” *TB* 19 (1968): 85, 94, 101. Van Seters, “The Creation of Man and the Creation of the King,” 340-42. C. L. Crouch, “Made in the Image of God: The Creation of the אדם, the Commissioning of the King and the Ckaoskampf of YHWH.” *JANER* 16 (January 2016): 7-11. H. J. Kraus, *Psalms 1–59: A Continental Commentary* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 1993), 183–184.

commission the king—known as the image of god—was likely well known in the ancient Near East. I would argue that the author of Genesis used the plural “let us” (at least in part) to remind its audience of Mesopotamian or Egyptian examples in which the image of god is created or commissioned, but to the tune of Yahweh, the superior deity. Because of Yahweh’s mastery over creation in Gen 1:1-25, there is no need for Yahweh to equip his images for war in Gen 1:26-31. In Genesis, chaos is subdued, Yahweh appears in complete control, and there are no kings involved (at least until the flood). The role of God’s image has been transferred to the people at large. One might speculate that the flood, brought on by humanity’s wickedness (Gen 6:5-7), is connected to humanity’s failure to live as God’s images. If this was the case, then the flood might be viewed as a cosmic (or at least universal) implication of the failure of God’s images. I argued in chapter 2 that the author of Ps 8 perceived a possible threat to Yahweh’s majesty over all the earth and therefore proclaimed a desire to assist the power of Yahweh. While the need to do battle may not have been present in Gen 1, the notion of the image of god and its ancient Near Eastern background could have caused the author of Ps 8 to appeal to the background of the image of god that connected it to human participation in divine conflict.

Psalm 8, Genesis 1, and the Image of God

Psalm 8, while it does not use the term “image of God,” uses similar language as Gen 1:26-30. Psalm 8:4-9 reads,

- 4) For I see your heavens, the works of your fingers,
moon and stars which you affixed.
- 5) What is humankind that you remember it,
or the son of humanity that you appointed him?
- 6) that you made them a little less than God,
And you will crown them with glory and majesty!
- 7) You will make them rule over the works of your hands;
you put everything under their feet.
- 8) Sheep and cattle, all of them.
And even the beasts of the field.
- 9) Birds of the sky and the fish of the sea.
The one who crosses²⁷ the paths of the seas.

Psalm 8:4 observes the creation of moon and stars, which God creates in Gen 1:14-18.

After beholding the creation of the moon and stars,²⁸ Ps 8:5 moves to the final element of creation in Gen:1:26-31, humankind. Like Genesis, Ps 8 describes an exalted status of humans with the responsibility of ruling or having dominion over elements of creation, but instead of stating that humans are made in the “image of God,” Ps 8 declares that humans are made “a little less than God.” What follows in 8:7-9 mirrors Gen 1:26 and 1:28 in that humans are made to have dominion (Genesis uses רדה) and rule over (Ps 8 uses משל) land animals, birds of the air, and fish of the sea. Even a surface-level reading of these texts suggests, at the very least, similar source material. I believe both texts contain similar language and themes because they are both adapting the Mesopotamian

27. Here the singular masculine participle (translated substantively) עֹבֵר, “the one who crosses,” might be parallel to the masculine plural participle יִנְקִימ, “the ones who suck/nurse,” to represent the most famous cosmic foe of Chaos—the sea monster.

28. In Chapter 1, in my discussion of *CAT 1.23*, I suggested a possible connection between the two texts in relationship to the luminaries that Yahweh creates and the luminary deities that the Ugaritic text seeks to honor. This type of relationship could also exist in connection with the re-appropriation of the ancient Near Eastern image-of-god ideology. Assurbanipal’s claim (cited above) that he was created by luminary deities is subverted along with the exclusivity of the image-of-god designation for kings. That is, not only do Gen 1 and Ps 8 apply the image-of-god ideology to humanity at large, but they also call into question Assurbanipal’s creation as a divinely appointed king, in light of Yahweh’s mastery over celestial bodies that Assyrians consider deities.

royal ideology in which only the king or priest was considered to bear the image of a god and mediate that deity in the world.²⁹

While both texts appear to be adapting image-of-god ideology, they appropriate them differently. Genesis 1 describes the rule of humanity as images of God only in relationship to nature, animals, plants, and fertility—themes that some of the texts surveyed above seem to incorporate with image-of-god ideology. Psalm 8, on the other hand, adds to the rule of animals the potential for humans (as Yahweh's images) to serve in matters of divine conflict, a prominent theme for the creation and commissioning of kings/images-of-god in the ancient Near East.

King as the Viceroy of Yahweh and Image-of-god Near Eastern Royal Ideology

If Ps 8, like Gen 1, is adapting the Mesopotamian image-of-god designation, claiming that all humans, not just kings, are able to represent and mediate the influence of

29. Richard Middleton, *The Liberation Image*, 98-121. Middleton argues that Gen 1-11 was written, in part, to challenge the larger Mesopotamian ideology that ordinary human beings (especially Israel) merely existed to provide the needs of the deities. For this thesis, the date of Ps 8 is less important than whether this text and its oral traditions were likely *utilized* by Israel during the oppression of Mesopotamian ideologies.

If such texts—or the ideology behind them—influenced the biblical *imago Dei*, this suggests that humanity is dignified with a status and role vis-a-vis the nonhuman creation that is analogous to the status and role of kings in the ancient Near East vis-a-vis their subjects. Genesis 1 . . . thus constitutes a genuine democratization of ancient Near Eastern royal ideology. As *imago Dei*, then, humanity in Genesis 1 is called to be the representative and intermediary of God's power and blessing on earth. (121)

The Mesopotamian “image-of-god” ideology held that it was a deity’s elected vicegerent, or *image*, who enforced the rule of the deity and helped establish the deity’s presence. This ideology could have been pervasive during Israel’s Babylonian captivity and early postexilic circumstances because Southern Mesopotamian (Babylonian) culture was so impressive and influential that surrounding nations were sometimes viewed as being uncivilized, and it was common for “civilized” Mesopotamians to culturally convert outsiders. Middleton understands the “image of God” in Genesis as part of a critique of the “pan-Mesopotamian” self consciousness in the Near East, propagated by Babylonian creation myths. See also Peter Machinist, “On Self-Consciousness in Mesopotamia,” in *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Age Civilizations*, ed. Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, (ANES Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), 183-202.

the deity, it is necessary to look not only to Egyptian or Assyrian conceptions of how the king represented the deity but also how the Bible depicts Israelite kings with the potential to function as representatives and mediators of Yahweh in matters of combat and prosperity.

Similar to the the creation of kings in the Neo-Babylonian text from the Atrahasis tradition cited above, ideal Israelite kings are sometimes commissioned to carry out the warfare of Yahweh, even against cosmic foes. As such, similar to the image-of-god ideology described above, the actions of Yahweh's ideal anointed kings sometimes have potential to participate in Yahweh's struggle against chaos (or at least the stability of society/creation within Israel)—for example, the “cosmic harmony” described above in the role of the ideal Assyrian and Egyptian Kings. The language used of the king's military might and responsibility to maintain the social order in Pss 2, 89, and 110 portrays the king as Yahweh's vicegerent in opposition to/in conflict with surrounding nations and deities. The relationship between Yahweh and king in these texts can remind us of the relationship between king and deity in the Assyrian and Egyptian texts discussed above.

A clear similarity between the descriptions of kings in the ancient Near East and Pss 2, 89, and 110 is the sonship language that implies that the king is born of the deity. Psalm 2:7 refers to the king as Yahweh's son. Psalm 110:3 also seems to refer to the birth of the king. Psalm 89:4, 27-28 refers to Yahweh as the King's father. J. J. M. Roberts explains that this is part of an enthronement formula that shows the military power of the

king, which he receives from Yahweh.³⁰ This relationship between king and deity parallels the ancient Near Eastern conceptions of divine royal sonship.

As we started to see in the previous section on the image of god, sonship of the deity in relationship to the power and authority of the king is a significant theme in Egyptian and Assyrian royal ideology.³¹ The Oracles of Encouragement to Esarhaddon say, “Esarhaddon, rightful heir, son of Mullissu! With an angry dagger in my hand I will finish off your enemies. . . . I keep you in the great heavens by your curl. I make smoke rise up on your right side, I kindle fire on your left.”³² While references to sonship are not specifically mentioned by the Assurbanipal texts cited above, this can remind us of Assyrian royal ideology of Assurbanipal where he claims he was born of the gods (although, this is not surprising since Esarhaddon was Assurbanipal’s father and immediate predecessor). The Assyrian text from the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic combines image-of-god ideology and sonship language, although perhaps more figuratively.

... he was cast sublimely from the womb of the gods. It is he who is the eternal image of Enlil, attentive to the people’s voice, the counsel of the land. . . . Enlil exalted him as if he (Enlil) were his (Tukulti-Ninurta’s) own father, right after his firstborn son.³³

The concepts of sonship and the image of god both enforce the legitimacy of the king as the deity’s representative. This is especially true of Egyptian kingship. The

30. J. J. M. Roberts, “The Enthronement of YHWH and David,” 682.

31. John Hilber, *Cultic Prophecy in the Psalms*, BZAW (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005), 89-100, 115-25. Kraus, *Psalms 1-59*, 129-32.

32. Simo Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies*, State Archives of Assyria 9 (Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1997), 8.

33. Benjamin R. Foster, *Before the Muses*, 301-2.

Egyptian image-of-god texts cited above also combine image of god with sonship and the idea of being born of the gods.

is the shining image of the lord of all and a creation of the gods of Heliopolis. . . . (H)e has begotten him, in order to create a shining seed on earth, for salvation for men, as his living image.³⁴

You are my beloved son, who came forth from my members, my image, whom I have put on earth. I have given to you to rule the earth in peace.³⁵

Another example in which the image of god is combined with sonship is in the coronation inscription of Horemheb: “A god’s image was his complexion: one feared when his form was beheld. His father Horus placed himself behind him, the one who created him making his protection.”³⁶

Above I cited Parpola and the idea that the Assyrian king was considered the “Perfect Man,” whose rule on earth corresponded to maintenance of the so-called “cosmic harmony.” In comparison, the Egyptians took an even more elevated view of the king. “The Mesopotamian king was, like Pharaoh, charged with maintaining harmonious relations between human society and the supernatural powers; yet he was emphatically not one of these but a member of the community. In Egypt, on the other hand, one of the gods had descended among men.”³⁷ Henri Frankfort illustrates this, in part with archeological evidence. One image, titled “Assurbanipal at War,” pictures Assurbanipal in battle, with his soldiers, presumably with the support of Assur. Another image, “Ramses

34. Clines, “Humanity as the Image of God,” 478-80.

35. Clines, “Humanity as the Image of God,” 480.

36. Murnane, *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt*, 231.

37. Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society and Nature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948), 8.

III Attacking Hittite Cities,” depicts Pharaoh not in any type of conceivable combat or perceived danger, but rather in a position of decorative invincibility.³⁸ Despite the seemingly elevated divine nature of the Egyptian king compared to the Assyrian king, the Egyptian king is also concerned with the maintenance of justice and order. “Pharaoh does not act arbitrarily. He maintains an established order (of which justice is an essential element) against the onslaught of the powers of Chaos.”³⁹ With these images in mind, I now turn to Pss 2, 89, and 110.

While Old Testament image-of-god language may appear only in Gen 1:26-27; 9:6, and Ps 8, the concept of sonship in Pss 2 and 89 appears in the same contexts as the ancient Near Eastern image-of-god ideology. I am not saying that image of god and son of god share identical meanings, but their close association in these texts is suggestive of the connections I will make (below) in this section between Ps 8 and Pss 2, 110, and 89. The following analysis of Pss 2, 89, and 110 will help show how these ancient Near Eastern concepts influenced Israelite kingship ideology and the imagined role of the king as Yahweh’s partner in combat.

Psalms 2, 89, and 110 envision a king from the line of David, anointed by the imperial deity Yahweh, who reigns from Zion. In Ps 2, the nations conspire “against the Lord and his anointed” (v. 2) king, whom he has set “on Zion” (v. 6) and to whom Yahweh has decreed “You are my son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession” (vv. 7-8). The

38. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, 8-9.

39. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, 9.

plotting of the nations poses no threat to Yahweh and his king because Yahweh's anointed son will "break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (v. 9). Psalm 2 portrays Yahweh as the imperial king, who has commissioned his vicegerent to rule over the nations. Psalm 110 makes a similar statement about Yahweh and his royal representative: "The Lord says to my lord, 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.' Your mighty scepter the Lord sends out from Zion. Rule in the midst of your foes" (Ps 110:1-2).

Psalms 2 and 110 appear to promote a high view of the king as the wielder of Yahweh's military power against enemies. Psalm 89 takes the king's role as mediator of Yahweh's military power to an even higher level. Psalm 89 laments the loss of the Davidic king and longs to see Yahweh's anointed return to power. In doing so, the author of Ps 89 appeals to 2 Sam 7:12-16 in verses 28-37 and the claim that the Davidic line is Yahweh's chosen servant (Ps 89:3, 20, 39, 50). The psalmist describes the Yahweh-given military authority of the king as Yahweh's anointed, similar to Pss 2 and 110, in verses 20-24 and also uses sonship language to legitimate this claim in verses 26-27. However, the Psalmist also adds a cosmic warrior dimension to the role of the king as Yahweh's mediator in which the king imitates the warrior kingship of Yahweh.⁴⁰ It appears that in Ps 89, the rule of Yahweh over Rahab is in parallelism with Yahweh placing the king's hand over the rivers and sea—likely references to the watery foes Yam and Prince/Judge

40. Shawn W. Flynn, *YHWH is King: The Development of Divine Kingship in Ancient Israel*; VTSUP 159 (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

River in the Ugaritic Baal Cycle.⁴¹ This is why Hamilton says that the military imagery in texts such as Pss 2, 89, and 110 “does not concern merely earthly politics by other means but the mythic combat between God and the forces of chaos. Or rather, the texts interpret human combat through a mythological grid.”⁴² J. J. M. Roberts argues that this ideology developed in order to legitimize the Davidic monarchy. The claims of the Davidic covenant and the sonship of the Davidide functioned to deter challengers to the throne. This made the king “sacrosanct,” so that sinning against the king was like sinning against Yahweh.⁴³ Roberts says,

the claim that the king participated legitimately in the divine rule as God’s agent, and that, accordingly, the king took part, both in his military campaigns and in his internal administration of justice, in God’s maintenance of control over the primeval powers of chaos, served to legitimate the exercise of monarchical power.⁴⁴

In these instances, the language used of the king’s military might and responsibility to maintain the social order mirrors language Israel used to describe Yahweh. The anointed king as son and servant acts like Yahweh in the role of maintaining the created order. It is not only Yahweh who keeps chaos at bay then, but also the king, whom Yahweh tasks with upholding the created order and defending his people from enemies.

41. Marvin Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, WBC (Dallas: Word Books, 1990.), 410, 422-25. Compare vv. 6-19 and 22-28; vv. 14 and 22-24; vv. 18 and 25 (cf. vv. 13 and 17); vv. 26 and verses 10-11; vv. 15 and 26; vv. 6-9 and 28.

42. Mark Hamilton, *The Body Royal: The Social Poetics of Kingship in Ancient Israel* (Boston: Brill, 2005), 35.

43. J. J. M. Roberts, “The Enthronement of YHWH and David,” 682. Roberts cites the narrative about David’s sparing of Saul in 1 Sam 24:7, 11; 26:9, 11, 16 to support this.

44. J. J. M. Roberts, “The Enthronement of YHWH and David,” 682.

Psalm 18 provides another example whereby the king seems to participate in Yahweh's conflict with cosmic foes characterized by the "waters," as in Ps 89, where Yahweh places the king over "sea" and "rivers." Psalm 18:8-16 illustrates Yahweh's moving through the heavens in cosmic warrior fashion.⁴⁵ Yahweh rides on a cherub, breaks through the clouds with hail stones and fire, thunders in the heavens, shoots arrows, and flashes forth lightning. These actions lay bare the foundations (מוסדות) of the world (v. 16). This language resembles that of Yahweh's chaoskampf, discussed in chapter 1, when Yahweh establishes (יָסַד) the heavens and the earth.⁴⁶ In Ps 18:8-16, Yahweh is playing the part of cosmic warrior, but the king is in the midst of the battle, starting in verse 17-18, "He reached down from on high, he took me; he drew me out of mighty waters. He delivered me from my strong [עַז] enemy, for they were too mighty for me." Here, we can understand "waters" as being similar to the bodies of water over which Yahweh places the king's hand in Ps 89. Only this time, the mythic waters⁴⁷ are too much for the king, and he is swallowed up. Yahweh comes to the rescue and proceeds to reequip the king for battle in verses 33-40. Yahweh trains the king's hands for war, and the king has the support of Yahweh's right hand.

45. Flynn, *YHWH is King*, 61.

46. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 173-74. Craigie draws parallels between Ugaritic Baal, Mot, and Yam in the descriptions of Yahweh in verses 5-6 (cf. CTA 2.iii and 5.i), verses 7-15 (cf. CTA 4.vii), and verses 16-20 (cf. CTA 2.iv and 6.vi).

47. Dahood, *Psalms 1-50*, 110. Dahood associates waters in verse 17 with "the waters of the nether world" or "death," and then reads the enemy in verse 18 as "Mot or Death, the chief enemy of Baal in Canaanite mythology. In UT, 49:VI:18, he is specifically stated to be strong: *mt 'z*, 'Mot is strong.'" See also, Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, who compares verses 16-20, where "the Lord rebukes ocean (Yam) and earth (viz., the underworld, realm of Mot) and delivers his servant: verses 16-20," to CTA 2.iv and 6.vi., in which Baal conquers Yam and Mot and establishes order.

In chapter 1, I explained the statement *עז יסד* in Ps 8 by showing how *יסד* and *עז* appear together in the context of *chaoskampf*. Here, in Psalm 18, we have the same theme at play, but the outcomes are somewhat reversed. Instead of Yahweh's establishing (*יסד*) the world and making it firm, Yahweh (as cosmic warrior) destabilizes the created order, laying bare the foundations of the world (*מוסדות תבל*), and causing the foundations of the mountains (*מוסדי הרים*) to tremble. Then, instead of Yahweh's establishing strength (*עז*), it is the strong (*עז*) enemy that overtakes the king, requiring Yahweh to rescue him from mighty waters, *ממים רבים*. This text illustrates Yahweh and his king in conflict with cosmic foes, but rather than an illustration of victory, Ps 18 describes Yahweh and his king in the midst of battle.

Psalm 72 represents perhaps a more practical outworking of the king's Yahweh-given authority in Pss 2, 89, and 110. Verses 1-2 ask that Yahweh give the king his righteousness and justice so that he may rule accordingly, defending the cause of the poor and powerless (vv. 2-4, 12-14). According to this ideal role of the king, the king (like Yahweh) delivers the poor and the oppressed from enemies (Ps 72:1-2, 12-14).⁴⁸ When the king fulfills this ideal role, the monarchy, the people, and all of creation prosper (vv. 15-17). This is how the ideal king works to establish the reign of Yahweh, as the actions of verses 1-17 lead to Yahweh's glory (the symbol of Yahweh's uncompromising sovereignty), filling the whole earth in verses 18-19 (cf. Isa 11:10).

This idea that the rule of the king is recognizable in creation appears in other places as well. 2 Samuel 23:1-7 suggests that the king's mediation of Yahweh is visible

48. J. J. M. Roberts, "The Enthronement of YHWH and David," 683.

in creation, claiming that “one who rules over people justly, ruling in the fear of God, is like the light of morning, like the sun rising on a cloudless morning, gleaming from the rain on the grassy land” (2 Sam 23:3b-4). This adds to the notion that the actions of the king mirror those of Yahweh, in which the righteous and just rule of the king contribute toward the ordering of creation.⁴⁹ The king’s management of social justice also extends to the functioning of creation in 1 Kgs 18:5-6 in Elijah’s dealings with Ahab.

These examples show how the Old Testament sometimes portrayed Israelite kings with the ability to function as Yahweh’s representatives in a way that impacted the cosmic harmony, in relationship to Yahweh’s conflict with surrounding nations and cosmic foes as well as Yahweh’s ordering of society and creation. These instances in which the king appears to function as Yahweh’s viceroy help explain the author’s desire in Ps 8 to serve Yahweh’s heavenly power/victory.

Psalm 8 and Yahweh’s Viceroy

These descriptions of the monarchy, functioning as the vicegerent of Yahweh, align with the claims I have made about Ps 8 and its reappropriation of the image-of-god ideology. It appears that some viewed Yahweh’s anointed king with the potential to act like Yahweh in the role of maintaining the created order and viewed this role through a “mythological grid” in which the king is imagined to participate in the mythic combat between Yahweh and the forces of chaos. If this imagined role of the king as the mediator

49. See also Stephen Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (Downers Grove: Varsity Press, 2003), 198, as it relates to Ps 89.

of Yahweh, in which the king participates in Yahweh's fight against cosmic foes, is being applied to all of humanity in Ps 8 (via the image of God in Gen 1), then it becomes clearer as to why Ps 8:2b would proclaim "May I serve your heavenly power/victory." This does not mean, however, that the speaker in Ps 8 is a newly anointed king. In chapter 1, I argued that the speaker in Ps 8 is a priest who sought to serve the heavenly power/victory of Yahweh in a way analogous to the priest in the Ugaritic myth of the goodly gods. In this chapter, I have argued that Gen 1 and Ps 8 appear to take the role of the Near Eastern king as the image of God and apply it to all humans. The royal language in Ps 8 of crowning humanity with glory and majesty to rule over the works of Yahweh's hands (vv. 6-7) signals the adaptation of this role, formerly reserved for a king and now bestowed upon all humans. This theological shift would have added to Ps 8's imagination for serving Yahweh's glorious heavenly power/victory. The question remains, however, what does this new role for humanity look like on earth?

The most apparent clue to answering this question in Ps 8 is in verses 8:7-8a: the desire to serve Yahweh with the earthly management of creation.

You will make them rule over the works of your hands.
All of them, you put under their feet.
Sheep and cattle, all of them.
And even the beasts of the field.
Birds of the sky and the fish of the sea. (Ps 8:7-8a)

Psalm 8:7-8a grounds the desire of the Psalmist in physical reality—that is, how the ruling actions of humanity might exist in plain sight. However, this earthly grounding is centered between Ps 8's bold claims that humans might serve at a cosmic level: the opening statement, "may I serve your heavenly power/victory," and the concluding claim

that even the comic foe, “The one who crosses the paths of the seas,” will be placed under the feet of humanity. The images of Yahweh in Ps 18:8-16 riding on a cherub, breaking through the clouds with hail stones and fire, thundering in the heavens, and flashing forth lightning illustrate what the author of Ps 8 may have in mind concerning Yahweh’s power על־השמים. It is unlikely that the author of Ps 8 expects to ascend to heaven and participate in this kind of conflict, and the management of animals in creation in verses 7-8a does not provide enough information to explain the actions intended with the statement “May I serve your heavenly power/victory.” The clues for understanding the imagined role of the psalmist in Yahweh’s heavenly struggle against chaos are the verb שרת and the royal nature of humanity’s appointment to serve Yahweh. In chapter 1, I surveyed the use of שרת and provided examples of how the verb is used in relationship to the priesthood and Torah obedience. I have suggested that the speaker in Ps 8 is a priest. I provided examples of how the priest must שרת in such a way in order to mediate the glory of Yahweh in the holy place. Similarly, in order for kings to fulfill the roles as Yahweh’s viceroy, they had to rule with justice and righteousness. In the next section, I will discuss a view of kingship that understood the just and righteous rule of the king as a prerequisite for mediating Yahweh. Understanding the ethics of kingship and how they relate to the ability to serve as Yahweh’s mediator will shed more light on the imagined role of the speaker in Ps 8 as a priest who seeks to serve Yahweh’s heavenly power/victory.

Ethics of Kingship and the Ability to Serve as Yahweh's Mediator

In chapter 1, I argued that the first person proclamation in Ps 8, “May I serve,” is the voice of a priest whose actions in the cult have cosmic implications (with the mytheme of the goodly gods as a parallel image). In this chapter, I have argued that the role of the king as mediator of Yahweh and ruler of the cosmos on his behalf is being transferred to all humanity via the image of god in Gen 1 and Ps 8. Before we explore the significance of the speaker in Ps 8 as a priest, it is helpful to understand how the king's ability to act justly and righteously affected his ability to function as Yahweh's mediator. This background for the role of the king will provide a foundation for the significance of the royal language in Ps 8 and the need for the speaker in Ps 8 to act with justice and righteousness in order to take on this the new role. This will lead us to examine the role of the speaker as a priest who must fulfill these ethical requirements in the cult in order to serve the heavenly power/victory or Yahweh.

Next, I will discuss a view of kingship that understood the just and righteous rule of the king as a prerequisite for mediating Yahweh in the ways described above. For this discussion, we return to Pss 18 and 89. Immediately following Yahweh's exultation of the king over sea and rivers in Ps 89:25-29, we read that king's descendants' ability to maintain this success is dependent upon their ability to follow Torah.

If his children forsake my law
and do not walk according to my ordinances,
if they violate my statutes
and do not keep my commandments,
then I will punish their transgression with the rod

and their iniquity with scourges. (Ps 89:30-33)

Here, the ability of the Davidic line to participate in Yahweh's struggle against chaos is affected by the ability to follow Torah. Psalm 18:21-25 provides a parallel example. After Yahweh rescues the king from mighty waters and the strong enemy in verses 17-20, Yahweh strengthens the king in verses 32-46, providing the support of his strong right hand and training the king's hands for war. However, we read in verses 21-25 that this is a "reward" for the king's righteousness.

The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness;
according to the cleanness of my hands he recompensed me.
For I have kept the ways of the Lord,
and have not wickedly departed from my God.
For all his ordinances were before me,
and his statutes I did not put away from me.
I was blameless before him,
and I kept myself from guilt.
Therefore the Lord has recompensed me according to my righteousness,
according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight.

In verses 1-20, the psalmist calls upon Yahweh in distress and Yahweh answers in cosmic combat to destroy the psalmist's enemies. In verses 21-25, we learn that Yahweh answered because of the king's righteousness. Also, because the king keeps Yahweh's statutes, Yahweh continues to fight alongside the psalmist in verses 35 and 40: "He trains my hands for war, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze. . . . For you girded me with strength for the battle; you made my assailants sink under me." Psalms 18 and 89 introduce us to the way in which the priestly view of kingship (e.g., Deut 17:14-20) influenced other texts related to kingship.

The sublimation of the royal ideology of Pss 18 and 89 to ethical requirements leads us on the path to understanding more clearly the practical role of humanity as recipients of the king's ability to participate in Yahweh's justice/righteousness in creation in an effort to maintain cosmic harmony by keeping the forces of chaos at bay. The ethical specification in Pss 18 and 89 (esp. Ps 89) highlights an important tension between the Davidic covenant/Yahweh's promise to the Davidic line (e.g., 2 Sam 7:12-16) and the Mosaic covenant/Torah specifications. Gary Knoppers writes, "While the Mosaic pact structures God's relationship with Israel through the instrument of the Law, the Davidic covenant announces God's grace to a particular dynasty."⁵⁰ Psalm 89:28-29 seems to contradict verses 30-32. Yahweh is establishing the line of David forever, but if they forsake the law, they will be punished. Knoppers shows how many scholars have tried to develop a "neat typology" for how the Davidic and Mosaic promises do or do not coincide in the Old Testament, but he says these typologies have been "overplayed" because both traditions are often integrated. "Most of the passages dealing with the Davidic promises relate these promises in some fashion to Yahweh's commandments. Integration was an ancient concern, not simply a modern approach."⁵¹ Therefore, even though the Davidic promises sometimes appear unconditional in the Old Testament, these promises were sometimes sublimated to Torah. George Knight makes an important observation about the relationship between the Mosaic and Davidic covenants.

50. Gary Knoppers, "David's Relation to Moses: The Contexts, Content and Conditions of the Davidic Promises" in *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, ed. John Day, JSOTSup 270 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 91.

51. Knoppers, "David's relation to Moses," 117.

Yahweh's covenant with David would never have been made if the prior covenant with all Israel at Mount Sinai had not been entered into first. David himself was an Israelite and was thus king over the covenant people. He could not have been the man he was had he not been born within the covenant, and had his whole life and thoughts not been shaped by its content and force. Thus the Davidic covenant is the lesser of the two covenants, and is dependent upon the greater for its validity.⁵²

In chapter 1, I suggested that the use of שרת in Ps 8 indicates that this is a priestly text. I also showed how the verb שרת appears in Deut 17 in the discussion of obedience to Yahweh in relationship to priests and kings. Understanding how priestly authors (or writers influenced by Mosaic/Deuteronomic traditions) idealized the role of the king as Yahweh's representative will begin to illuminate how the author of Ps 8 sought to serve the heavenly power/victory of Yahweh.

From a priestly perspective, Yahweh's anointed king would fulfill both covenants, but this idealization of the monarchy in which the king was thought to mediate the reign of Yahweh on earth and in the cosmos with justice and righteousness set a standard that the king rarely achieved. Ideally, a righteous and prosperous reign of the king at the behest of Yahweh would have reinforced the claim of Yahweh as the imperial deity and the ideal king as his viceroy. In order to show the ways in which the Davidic covenant is at times connected to Mosaic specifications, I will start with 2 Sam 7:12-16.

Yahweh's mediation through kings via the Davidic covenant begins in 2 Sam 7:12-16. This text represents a point at which the Davidic line becomes the official mediator of Yahweh. In this text, David wants to build a house for Yahweh, but Nathan reports a vision in which Yahweh says that David will not build a house for the Lord.

52. George Knight, *Servant Theology: A Commentary on the Book of Isaiah 40-55* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 192.

Instead, Yahweh will have a descendent of David build the house, and Yahweh will establish the throne of David forever. Yahweh will still punish the king if he transgresses; however, the promises to the line of David will remain.

When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. When he commits iniquity, I will punish him with a rod such as mortals use, with blows inflicted by human beings. But I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever. (2 Sam 7:12-16)

In this text, Yahweh is the Davidide's father, and the Davidic king is Yahweh's son (cf. Pss 2, 89, and 110 discussed above). In addition, in the verses that follow in 2 Sam 7:18-29, David is Yahweh's servant (cf. Ps 89:20; 132:10). In order to enforce these titles more strongly, the Davidic king was also the anointed of Yahweh as Yahweh instructs Samuel to anoint David in 1 Sam 16:1-3, 6, 13 (cf. 1 Kgs 1:32-34; Ps 2:1-2; of Saul in 1 Sam 9:15-16; 10:1). In 2 Sam 5, the anointing of David as king is associated with two more metaphors for the ideal king: shepherd (cf. Ps 78:70-72) and רִנָּן (or אֲשִׁרָה), translated as prince, ruler, or leader (cf. 1 Sam 9:16; 10:1; 13:14; 25:30; 2 Sam 6:21).

The Lord said to you [David]: It is you who shall be shepherd of my people Israel, you who shall be ruler [רִנָּן (prince)] over Israel. So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron; and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the Lord, and they anointed David king over Israel. (2 Sam 5:2b-3)

The idea that the king is the “prince” of Yahweh helps explain the ways in which the king's rule imitates Yahweh's. The prince's (or king's) rule is like that of the King's (or Yahweh's); however, the authority of the king far outweighs that of the prince. Taken

together, the Davidic king as son⁵³ and servant of Yahweh is the anointed prince over the people so that he might shepherd⁵⁴ them as Yahweh would. Israel used these designations, in part, to legitimize, maintain, and critique the monarchy by showing how the rule of the king stems from (and is like) the rule of Yahweh.

These images promote a very high view of the ideal earthly king. While this royal ideology likely developed in light of political and social factors—such as family propaganda⁵⁵ or exile⁵⁶—the historical reality is that the earthly king, anointed by Yahweh as son, servant, prince, and shepherd rarely appears to reach this height.⁵⁷ The historical failure of the king to reach ideal status was measured, in part, by Torah. Torah served to moderate and enhance the ideal royal ideology, as Israel used it to critique the current king for not mediating Yahweh’s reign and to promote hope for a future ideal king who, with the anointing of Yahweh, would usher in a promised future. Ideally, as in Isa 11:1-10, the ideal king would maintain justice and peace in the land by ruling with the rod of Yahweh and with the wisdom of Yahweh. In Isa 11:1-10, Yahweh endows the king

53. The language of sonship in 2 Sam 7:14 (cf. 1 Chr 22:3-6; 28:6-10; Isa 9:6-7), was a political title that helped legitimate the authority of the Davidic covenant. J. J. M. Roberts, “The Enthronement of Yhwh and David, 682. J. J. M. Roberts, “Public Opinion, Royal Apologetics, and Imperial Ideology: A Political Analysis of the Portrait of David, ‘A Man After God’s Own Heart,’” *ThTo* 69 (2012): 117-18, 125. “During the approximately 400-plus years of the Judean monarchy, the Davidic dynasty was never displaced. By contrast, the Israelite monarchy had 11 dynastic changes in a little over 300 years.”

54. The image of Shepherd was also common to describe the rule of Mesopotamian kings (discussed above on Assyrian royal ideology.).

55. Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 606: “No doubt this interpretation of David and his dynasty is informed by powerful political interests, not only of the family, but of a segment of society (urban elite) who benefited from a centralized government.” These family/political influences likely caused the exultation of the earthly Davidic king’s mediation of Yahweh.

56. In exile, the people lamented the failure of the oath given to David in 2 Sam 7. This appears in Ps 89:38-45, 49-51. However, this so-called “failure” is likely the outworking of 2 Sam 7:14b and the king’s failure to keep Torah.

57. Josiah is maybe the closest example (e.g., 2 Kgs 23:25).

with Torah-like wisdom in order to rule over and instruct the nations, issuing blessing and worldwide peace.

The claims of the ideal royal ideology were susceptible to the abuse of power and therefore needed to strengthen the warning of 2 Sam 7:14b. Because of the difficulty for the king to live up to the ideal standards and the temptation to abuse power, Deut 17:14-20 presents an ideal picture of the king, “tempered by all the history of kingship.”⁵⁸ Deuteronomy 17:14-20 contains the Mosaic requirements of kingship based on what composers of Deuteronomy knew about the predicaments and pitfalls of kings. Central to Deut 17:14-20 is “careful obedience to divine law.”⁵⁹ This text emphasizes that if the king is an Israelite, chosen by Yahweh, who keeps Torah, does not acquire too much in horses, wives, and wealth, reads the law daily, and does not elevate himself exceedingly, then the king, his house, and the nation will have great prosperity (cf. Pss 132, 72).

Both David and Solomon failed to keep Torah completely according to the royal ideology. When David acts as if he is above the law, sleeping with Bathsheba (2 Sam 11:27), Nathan indicts him in 2 Sam 12:9-10. In verses 11-12 Yahweh brings calamity on David for not following the law. Yahweh makes it clear to Solomon that he will judge him according to the ethical standards of Torah in 1 Kgs 9:4-8. Then, 1 Kgs 11:1-12 lists the offenses of Solomon, with clear breaches of the specifications of Deut 17:14-20.

Because of these violations, Solomon can no longer continue as Yahweh’s royal mediator.

The LORD became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. Although he had

58. Patrick Miller, *Deuteronomy*, IBC (Louisville: John Knox, 1990), 148.

59. Miller, *Deuteronomy*, 148.

forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the LORD's command. So the LORD said to Solomon, "since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates." (1 Kgs 11:9-11)

Second Kings 22-23 presents Josiah as a model king who repented when he heard the words of the "book of the law" (v. 11) and issued a reform. Second Kings 23:25 reads, "Before him there was no king like him, who turned to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him." However, this was not enough to overturn the consequences of Manasseh's violations (2 Kgs 21:1-18), and Yahweh still promised to carry out the threat of 2 Sam 7:14b.

In these examples, failure to keep Torah prevents Yahweh's chosen king from being his ideal mediator. In order to fulfill the role that the ideal royal ideology suggests, the similarities between Yahweh's rule and the king's rule (described above) must also include the Torah's regulations of justice and righteousness. In Ps 101 for example, the king, like Yahweh, must maintain a just administration. In Ps 101, the language used of the king is very close to language used of Yahweh in terms of keeping ethical company (e.g., cf. Ps 101:6 and Isa 56:6-7). According to Roberts, this "underscores the degree to which the king participates in the divine rule."⁶⁰ Like Ps 89, the shared descriptions of Yahweh and the king are a strong representation of the way Israel understood the king as representative of Yahweh's reign in the world. Psalm 72 is another example of this, in which the king must tend to the poor and powerless (Ps 72:1-4, 12-14). Similarly, Ps 74

60. Roberts, "The Enthronement of YHWH and David," 683.

calls Yahweh to this same task (e.g., Ps 74:19), only as Israel's shepherd (Ps 74:1). This image, applied to Yahweh in Ps 74, parallels the ideal king's role as the shepherd of Israel (mentioned above). Next, I will show how the prophets in the Old Testament used this royal metaphor of the shepherd (for both the king and Yahweh) to critique the king and offer hope for a future ideal king. The critiques of kings who were unable to meet the ethical requirements of acting as Yahweh's will then lead us to better understand how Israel understood the role of the king being transferred to the people as a whole, which helps us better understand the context behind the theology of Ps 8.

The Torah specifications for the ideal king (combined with the royal ideology described above) became the standard by which the prophets evaluated the kings. Because the royal ideology claimed that the righteous and just rule of the king contributes toward the stability of creation and society, exile became the fault of the monarchy. The significance of Israel's faith in the mediation of Yahweh via the king shows in exile, as Israel attributes the destruction to the failure of the king. This is where the ideal king as shepherd takes on an important role.

In Jer 22, the prophet criticizes the king and promises exile. Jeremiah 22:2-5 shows that Yahweh's desire for well-being is connected to the righteous agency of the human king. If the king acts with justice and righteousness towards the alien, orphaned, and widowed (etc.), then the house of the king will prosper. In contrast, Jer 22:15-16 recalls Josiah and how his righteous actions toward the poor and needy constituted knowledge/mediation of Yahweh.⁶¹

61. Judging rightly is also the substance of knowing Yahweh in Hos 6:6.

Are you a king
because you compete in cedar?
Did not your father eat and drink
and do justice and righteousness?
Then it was well with him.
He judged the cause of the poor and needy;
then it was well.
Is not this to know me?
says the Lord. (Jer 22:15-16)

In this text, the right action of the king leads to the mediation of Yahweh's self to the king. In the example of Josiah, ruling righteously leads to "knowing Yahweh"⁶² and mediating his reign. Then, Jer 22:24-30 returns to Yahweh's frustration with the monarchy, as he prepares to send his people into exile. Here, the prophet connects exile with the termination of the monarchy in which none of the king's "offspring shall succeed in sitting on the throne of David, and ruling again in Judah" (v. 30b). Just as Jeremiah 22 associates the presence of an ideal king with prosperity and knowledge of Yahweh, the absence of this leader goes hand in hand with the exile. The absence of a righteous king equals exile; the return of an ideal king equals restoration and peace. Even though Yahweh is the one who effects exile or well being, the actions of the king appear to have a direct affect on whether Yahweh exiles or prospers Israel. Jeremiah continues the critique of the king with the shepherd metaphor in Jer 23:1-2, linking the failure of the king/shepherd with exile (cf. Ezek 34:3-6). Then, Jer 23:3-7 includes hope for a future righteous king/shepherd:

I will raise up shepherds over them who will shepherd them, and they shall not fear any longer, or be dismayed, nor shall any be missing, says the Lord. The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous

62. Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 613.

Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. (Jer 23:4-5)

In the ideal king's/shepherd's rule, Judah will receive salvation, and Israel will live in safety. In this text, the rule of a just and righteous king/shepherd who deals wisely (i.e. follows Torah) will bring peace and salvation, as Yahweh declares that he will bring the people out of exile as he brought Israel out of Egypt (vv. 7-8). This future is not disconnected from the role of the king.

The king/shepherd parallel between Yahweh and the ideal king is explicit in Ezek 34. Ezekiel, who harshly criticizes the king in 34:1-16, also looks toward a future when Yahweh will appoint an ideal royal Davidic servant in Ezek 34:23-24. In the meantime, however, because the king's mediation of Yahweh has failed, Yahweh must come and shepherd the sheep himself: "I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord God." Yahweh says, "I will feed them with justice" (Ezek 34:16b), a job that Yahweh had entrusted to the king. After Yahweh has restored justice to his sheep (vv. 1-16), he

will set up over them one shepherd, [Yahweh's] servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince [נִשְׂרָף⁶³] among them; I, the Lord, have spoken. (Ezek 34:23-24).

It is significant here that Yahweh critiques the king for being a bad shepherd and that when the king fails to "feed the sheep," Yahweh must come in and do the job himself. Then, after Yahweh has restored the people, he will appoint a new king to "feed the sheep." Yahweh is capable of "feeding the sheep" himself, and even though the king has

63. Here Ezekiel uses a synonym of נִשְׂרָף.

failed to carry out this task, Yahweh persists in giving this job to the king, his shepherd/prince. This illustrates the prince metaphor for the ideal king. Both Yahweh (as king) and the Davidide (the prince) share in the same rule (shepherding the people); however, the prince (ideal Davidide) is subordinate to the king (Yahweh) in the mediation of that rule.

According to the texts surveyed here, when Yahweh's chosen king acts with justice, righteousness, and faithfulness to Yahweh, the king has the potential to carry out Yahweh's will for public and political life, including issues of order, power, and justice.⁶⁴ Understanding this role of the king, in which his actions contribute to the establishment and maintenance of Yahweh's justice and righteousness in creation for the well-being of Israel and the world, helps illustrate how we might begin to understand the speaker's ability/desire in Ps 8 to serve Yahweh's power/victory in respect to ethical/religious behavior in the priesthood. However, in order to make this connection, we must further understand how the office of Yahweh's king, described above, was transferred to Israel at large.

The Role of the King Transferred to Israel as a Whole

Ezekiel 34 depicts Yahweh stepping in to take over the role of the king. Isaiah 40-55, however, identified Israel as Yahweh's servant mediator in the absence of Yahweh's royal representative by applying the role of Yahweh's servant mediator, formerly promised to the Davidic line, to the people as a whole.

64. Walter Brueggemann, 600-1, 611.

Incline your ear, and come to me;
listen, so that you may live.
I will make with you an everlasting covenant,
my steadfast, sure love for David.
See, I made him a witness to the peoples,
a leader and commander for the peoples.
See, you shall call nations that you do not know,
and nations that do not know you shall run to you,
because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel,
for he has glorified you. (Isa 55:3-5)

Here, if Israel will accept and live into this role as Yahweh's new royal "Davidic"⁶⁵ servants, Israel will be glorified and perhaps even mediate the glory of Yahweh (49:3; 55:5; cf. 40:5) by practicing justice and righteousness, leading to their liberation and prosperity and prompting foreign nations to come to Zion and submit to Yahweh (49:6-7; 55:5).

The royal ideology described in this chapter promised that the nation would prosper when an ideal king took the throne, mediating the righteousness and justice of Yahweh as well as Yahweh's power over chaotic forces. When the monarchy failed to live up to this standard, kings received harsh criticism and the community eventually paid the penalty of exile. Israel continued to place its hope in the kingship of a future ideal king who would return to power and restore justice even when the monarchy had all but disappeared.⁶⁶ In Isa 40-55, the task of functioning as Yahweh's mediator was passed on to the people as a whole. In this way, the hope of a promised future was less dependent upon the prospect of an ideal king and more dependent upon on the community of Israel,

65. Davidic appears in quotation marks because the whole of Israel is not part of the Davidic dynasty. So, while the promises on offer to David and his line were reappropriated and applied to Israel as a whole, they did not actually become Davidides.

66. Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 617.

now glorified for the purpose of bringing about Yahweh's reign by practicing justice and righteousness.

This potentially means that the actions of the community now bear the burden of maintaining justice and peace in the land by ruling with the rod of Yahweh and with the wisdom of Yahweh, as in Isa 11:1-10. In Isa 11:1-10, Isaiah points to the coming of a new ideal Davidic ruler as both a critique of the the present king (Ahaz) and a message of hope for the next davidic ruler (perhaps Hezekiah). The future ideal Davidide (v. 1), having received knowledge of Torah from the spirit of Yahweh (vv. 2-4⁶⁷), will delight in the "fear of Yahweh" (v. 3) and judge the poor and meek with righteousness (v. 4a). This righteous rule of the king also works to dispel enemies, as the king strikes "the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips [kills] the wicked." This righteous rule ensures peace in Jerusalem and safety from forces of chaos throughout the earth (vv. 5-9). At that time, the nations will come to receive Yahweh's instructions from the Davidic king (v. 10). In this text, Yahweh endows the king with Torah-like wisdom in order to rule over and instruct the nations, issuing blessing and worldwide peace. In Isa 40-55 (e.g., Isa 55:3-5), this role was passed on to Israel as a whole. This is how we might understand Ps 8's proclamation "may I serve." In Ps 8, Yahweh is crowning humans with glory and is making them to rule over the works of his hands. Psalm 8 is

67. Solomon's request in 1 Kgs 3:9, (and Yahweh's positive response) likely reflects the need for the king to follow Torah in order to be prosperous (1 Kgs 3:11-14). Yahweh is generous to Solomon because he asks for wisdom and "understanding to discern what is right" (v. 11). Yahweh gives Solomon a "wise and discerning mind" (v. 12), in addition to riches (v. 13), with the stipulation in verse 14, "If you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your life."

expressing a desire on the part of those participating in reciting the psalm to live into this role of mediating the reign of Yahweh.

At times Yahweh had anointed the King as his son and servant to be a shepherd and prince over the people, but in order to continue in this role (at least from priestly perspective), the king has to keep Yahweh's statutes. This kingship that mediates Yahweh must cohere with Yahweh's reign and Yahweh's ethical specifications. Yahweh extended his power to the ideal king for the establishment and maintenance of justice and righteousness in the interest of Israel's and the world's communal well being. In Isa 40-55 and in Ps 8, this power was extended to the people as a whole.

The hope for an ideal king continued even after Israel returned from exile (Hag 2:23; cf. Zech 9:9-10).⁶⁸ However, in Isa 60-62, it appears that this hope was still (at least in the Isaiah tradition) fixed on Yahweh's people fulfilling this role, that is the responsibility for the establishment and maintenance of justice and righteousness in the interest of Israel's and the world's communal well being. Isaiah 61:1-6 envisioned the community performing this role as priests and ministers of God. This leads us to the connection between the priesthood and Ps 8.

68. After exile, this hope was expressed by Hag 2:23: "On that day, says the Lord of hosts, I will take you, O Zerubbabel my servant, son of Shealtiel, says the Lord, and make you like a signet ring; for I have chosen you, says the Lord of hosts" (Hag 2:23; cf. Zach 9:9-10). This postexilic hope reflects the same image as Jer 22:24, who used the image of the signet ring negatively. Even if the king of Judah "were the signet ring on my right hand, even from there I would tear you off and give you into the hands of those who seek your life . . . even into the hands of King Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon . . ." (Jer 22:24-25). This is a clear example of how Israel used the ideology of the ideal Davidic king both positively and negatively. The hope is that the one who "wears the signet ring" will mediate the just and righteous rule of Yahweh. However, when the king fails to meet those standards, Yahweh "tears the signet ring off."

The Priestly Service of Yahweh in Psalm 8

In Pss 18 and 89, in order for Yahweh's king to participate in Yahweh's heavenly power/victory, the king must rule according to ethical specifications. Because the king (in the Deuteronomic tradition) is bound to Torah, the king is able to serve the power of Yahweh insofar as Yahweh extends his power to the king in the interest of establishing and maintaining justice and righteousness for the sake of Israel's communal well-being. Psalm 8 participates in this tradition by reappropriating ancient Near Eastern image-of-god ideology and intermeshing it with Isaiah's so-called "democratization" of ideal Israelite royal ideology (cf. Isa 55:3). With all of these pieces in mind, the question still remains as to how the author of Ps 8 envisioned serving (אשרתנה) Yahweh. Understanding Ps 8 in a priestly context, in which the author was concerned with Mosaic specifications, helps explain this.

Reading שרת in Ps 8 suggests that the text has a priestly background for the royal language used in the psalm. In chapter 1, I gave various examples for how שרת is used in priestly contexts and how it is also used for the actions of those attending or serving in various capacities, including situations related to the service of Yahweh in combat. In chapter 2, I argued that Ps 8 uses ancient Near Eastern image-of-god ideology to justify the psalmist's desire to serve Yahweh's power over chaos. I have attempted to show how Israelite kings were at times illustrated as participating in Yahweh's struggle against chaos and how this ability of the king was sometimes subject to Torah specifications. Then, by way of Isa 55:3 (in combination with Genesis's application of image-of-god

ideology) I have shown how the author of Ps 8 stood in good company when applying this role of the king to humanity at large. The use of שרת in Ps 8 and its priestly associations are the key for understanding how the author could have practically conceived of such a bold proclamation to serve Yahweh's heavenly power/victory. The priestly understanding of creation and Yahweh's ordering of the universe, mythologized as Yahweh defeating the chaos monster, orients us to the way in which the author of Ps 8 could have imagined serving the heavenly power/victory of Yahweh. As in chapter 1, I turn to Jon Levenson to help explain this theological concept.

Levenson points to the Sabbath, within the context of Gen 1-2, as a way that humans have the potential to participate in the "cosmogonic process"⁶⁹ with the "mimetic reenactment of the primordial divine response."⁷⁰ In this sense, "Israel participates, through the very forms of its collective existence, in the divine rest that consummated creation."⁷¹ While the Sabbath is not mentioned in Ps 8, Ps 8's relationship to the Gen 1 creation account and Ps 8's concern with Yahweh's creation of the universe and appointment of humanity could cause the recipients of this text to recall the sevenfold process of creation, the institution of the Sabbath, and humanity's participation in divine rest. In this respect, to serve the heavenly power/victory of Yahweh is to observe the Sabbath as a way to re-enact the conclusion of Yahweh's heavenly victory as Yahweh subdued chaos and created/established the universe. This combination of myth and ritual connects the observer of the Sabbath to Yahweh's victory over chaos in creation and

69. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 117.

70. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 100.

71. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 103.

allows the participant to serve and promote the ongoing results of this victory into the future. In this sense, “through myth and ritual, humans contribute to the maintenance of the cosmos and the expression of divine majesty and power.”⁷² This is how the author of Ps 8 connected priestly conceptions of service to the heavenly power/victory of Yahweh. The practice of the Sabbath in this context provides one example in which, for Ps 8, “the commandments concerning ethics and ritual are connected to divine rule, meaning the heavenly world may be affected by human action.”⁷³ Levenson also illustrates this in connection with the holiness code in Leviticus. He links the four occurrences of the *hiphil* of בָּדַל in Lev 20:24-26 to the word’s repetitive use in Gen 1:4, 6, 7, 14, and 18. Levenson suggests that “the distinction of Israel from the nations is as fundamental to cosmic order as the separations through which God first brought order out of chaos.”⁷⁴ The significance of separation here can remind us of the way in which the verb שָׂרַת is used in the priestly contexts to describe the proper ordering of temple practices in order to successfully minister/serve in the presence of Yahweh. These priestly practices help create space in which humans can participate with the divine. In this way,

the temple is a microcosm of the perfect and harmonious world as it ought to be. In the ritual building and rededication of the temple, once again humans participate in the divine ordering of the world. In sacred space and time, Israel proleptically participates in the defeat of chaos and the transformation of chaos into order.⁷⁵

72. Leo Perdue, *Reconstructing Old Testament Theology: After the Collapse of History* (Fortress: Minneapolis, 2005), 233. Here, Perdue is summarizing Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

73. Perdue, *Reconstructing Old Testament Theology*, 234.

74. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 118.

75. Perdue, *Reconstructing Old Testament Theology*, 188. Here, Perdue is explaining Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 121-27, esp. 127.

This understanding of the potential of the priesthood and the temple to participate in the defeat of chaos provides a reasonable explanation as to why the author of Ps 8 would proclaim “May I serve your heavenly power/victory.” The concept described here also connects to the illustration I provided in chapter 1, in which the actions of the Ugaritic priest contribute to the subduing of the destructive/chaotic force of the goodly gods in *CAT 1.23*. By seeking to serve Yahweh’s power/victory over cosmic foes, the goodly gods (Ps 8:3), and Leviathan (Ps 8:9), Ps 8 takes the implicit connection between priestly sacred space and Yahweh’s ordering of the world and exploits it by explicitly connecting the psalmist’s service of Yahweh to the defeat of cosmic foes.

If we understand Ps 8’s desire to serve Yahweh in the priestly context of myth/ritual and the idea that humans can participate in the defeat of chaos through the temple cult, how does the verb שרת function in this context? After all, שרת does not appear in Gen 1-2 or in Leviticus. Here, we return to the Isaiah tradition in which the promises on offer to David were applied to Israel as a whole. The verb שרת appears four times in Isa 56-61. Isaiah 56:6-7 connects the service of Yahweh (לשרתו, or ministry in NRSV) to keeping the Sabbath.

And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord,
to minister to him (לשרתו), to love the name of the Lord,
and to be his servants,
all who keep the Sabbath, and do not profane it,
and hold fast my covenant—
these I will bring to my holy mountain,
and make them joyful in my house of prayer;
their burnt offerings and their sacrifices
will be accepted on my altar;
for my house shall be called a house of prayer

for all peoples.

Similarly, Isa 61 connects the proliferation of righteousness and the praise of Yahweh to the exaltation of Israel as priests and ministers of God using the verb שרת. Isaiah 61:6 says “but you shall be called priests of the Lord, you shall be named ministers (משרתי) of our God; you shall enjoy the wealth of the nations, and in their riches you shall glory.”

The servant theology surrounding the verb שרת in Trito-Isaiah, in relationship to Deutero-Isaiah and the reappropriation of the Davidic mandate provides a possible lens through which to more fully understand Ps 8’s proclamation, אשרתנה הדרך עליהשמים (May I serve you heavenly power/victory!).

CHAPTER III

THE ROLE OF THE SERVANT: PSALM 8 AND ISAIAH

In the previous chapter, I showed how ideal royal ideology, sublimated to Torah or the priesthood, became the basis for many prophetic critiques of the monarchy. Ideally, the rule of the king would reflect Yahweh's reign in the world, and the king's actions would cohere with Yahweh's law. Even though this vision of the ideal king found sparse manifestation in historical reality, this ideology—and (at least) the potential of the king to bring about the reign of Yahweh on earth—formed a source of hope for a promised future that Yahweh would bring about through an ideal king. In Trito-Isaiah, the hope for this future king (or perhaps ideal Davidide) is probably already extinguished in light of the exile and texts such as Isa 55:3, in which the Davidic promises seem to be applied to Israel as a whole. In this chapter, I will illustrate an interpretation of Yahweh's servant(s) theology in Isa 40-66 that could explain Ps 8's desire to "serve Yahweh's heavenly power/victory." In order to do this, I will focus on particular texts that share commonalities with Ps 8: (1) There are shared motifs and vocabulary in Isa 42, 51-52, 55, 56, and 61 that help explain the theology of Ps 8. (2) Comparisons between Ps 8 and Isa 60-62 further illustrate Ps 8's relationship to this Isaiah servant theology and Ps 8's desire to serve (שרת) Yahweh. These sections will finally allow us to place Ps 8 within more

specific historical and theological contexts, in which we can understand the proclamation “May I serve your heavenly power/victory” (Ps 8:2b).

Isaiah 42, 51-52, 55, 56, 61 and Psalm 8

The author of Ps 8 was operating with theology similar to the servant theology found in Trito-Isaiah. However, it is difficult to discuss the servant theology of Isa 56-66 without referencing Isa 40-55 because several of the themes from chapters 40-55 are carried over into chapters 56-66 (and in some cases, perhaps the other way around).¹ In line with what I have argued so far in this thesis, Ps 8 was composed not simply with reference to the “democratization” of the Davidic mandate, or even to Isa 40-55, but in light of the servant theology in Trito-Isaiah that extends and develops certain themes of Isa 40-55.² This approach leads me to begin with Isa 51-52, followed by Isa 55, 56, and 61. Exploring the connections between these texts will shed more light on Ps 8’s vision for serving Yahweh in relationship to cosmic foes and matters related to Torah.

1. Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, “Continuity and Discontinuity in Isaiah 40-66: History of Research,” 13-40 in *Continuity and Discontinuity: Chronological and Thematic Development in Isaiah 40-66*; FRLHNT 255 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014). The other articles in this volume are also instructive.

2. I am adapting this methodology from Michael A. Lyons, “Psalm 22 and the ‘Servants’ of Isaiah 54; 56-66,” 647.

Isaiah 51-52

In chapter 1 of this thesis, I showed how Ps 8 contains similar vocabulary as Isa 51, when considering the phrase *עז יסדת עז* in Ps 8:3. To repeat, *עז יסדת עז* in Ps 8:3 does not appear elsewhere in the Old Testament; however, the two words do appear in close proximity in the context of conflict with cosmic foes and the establishment of creation in Isa 51:9-16. In Isa 51:9-11, the author calls on Yahweh to act as he did in the exodus by invoking Yahweh to put on strength (*לבשי-עז*) and by mythologizing the exodus as Yahweh's defeat of Rahab, in order that the people return to Zion.

Awake, awake, put on strength (*לבשי-עז*),
O arm of the Lord!
Awake, as in days of old,
the generations of long ago!
Was it not you who cut Rahab in pieces,
who pierced the dragon?
Was it not you who dried up the sea,
the waters of the great deep;
who made the depths of the sea a way
for the redeemed to cross over?
So the ransomed of the Lord shall return,
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. (Isa 51:9-11)

In this text, *עז* is a precondition of Yahweh's defeat of the cosmic foe Rahab, but instead of requesting that Yahweh establish (*יסד*) a stronghold (*עז*), the speaker invokes Yahweh to put on *עז* in order to defeat enemies. The verb *יסד* does appear in verse 13 in Yahweh's answer to the speaker's request in verses 9-11, when Yahweh reminds the orator that Yahweh *יסד ארץ עז*. In Isa 51, *עז* and *יסד* appear four verses apart, and the lines of poetry in

which they appear correspond to one another. Isaiah 51:9-11 calls upon Yahweh to ensure stability in Zion by acting as he once did, putting on עַרְוָה and defeating the chaos monster.

Isaiah 51:12-14 provides an answer.

I, I am he who comforts you;
why then are you afraid of a mere mortal who must die,
a human being who fades like grass?
You have forgotten the Lord, your Maker,
who stretched out the heavens
and laid the foundations of the earth.
You fear continually all day long
because of the fury of the oppressor,
who is bent on destruction.
But where is the fury of the oppressor?
The oppressed shall speedily be released;
they shall not die and go down to the Pit,
nor shall they lack bread. (Isa 51:12-14)

Yahweh answers the request to put on עַרְוָה in verse 9 with a question in verse 12, why are you afraid? Yahweh responds to the invocation to act as he once did to destroy Rahab in verses 9b-10 with a reminder that he already יָסַד the earth in verse 13. Yahweh responds to the plea for a return to Zion in verse 11 with an assurance that this will happen quickly in verse 14. These verses, in which עַרְוָה and יָסַד appear on corresponding sides of the dialogue between Yahweh and the speaker, provide a thematic parallel for understanding the statement יָסַדְתָּ עָרְוָה in Ps 8. In Isa 51, part of Yahweh's answer to the speaker's plea to put on the עַרְוָה (as he did to defeat Rahab) could be summarized by saying, why are you afraid? Have you forgotten that I am the one who who established (יָסַד) the earth. If we remember the texts in which Yahweh destroys the chaos monster to establish the earth (discussed above), Yahweh's answer can be understood as, I have already defeated Rahab when I established the earth. The author of Ps 8 poetically condenses the concept that

Yahweh יסדת ארץ by defeating cosmic foes by putting on עז into one two-word statement, יסדת עז.

Parallel to Isa 51:9, Isa 52:1 depicts Jerusalem as putting on עז as well, using the same verb, לבש. Here, עז might represent armor, which intimates that “Once ‘strength’ has been put on, then into battle!”³ There are no battle scenes in Isa 51-52, but it is noteworthy that Jerusalem is strengthened and portrayed as an “armored” city in Isa 52:1, parallel to the strengthening of Yahweh and his defeat over cosmic foes in Isa 51. Here, Deutero-Isaiah seems to pair the themes of human and divine combat. John Watts sees the עז of Yahweh in Isa 51:9 and the עז of Jerusalem in 52:1 as bookends to a chiasm in which the center thrust of the text is the challenge to Jerusalem to “stand up and stand firm (v. 17).”⁴ In this reading, the opening of the unit in 51:9-11 is “a choral challenge to the arm of Yahweh to bring redemption,” and the closing of the chiasm in 52:1-2 is “a choral challenge to Zion to seize her God-given opportunity.”⁵ The message to Jerusalem here would be that the restoration from exile requires Israel’s active participation.

Isaiah 51 and Ps 8 actually have three additional themes in common that support a theological relationship between between the two texts. (1) Isaiah 51 also contains imagery from Gen in verses 2-3. Verse 2 orients the audience to their origin in Abraham and Sarah, while Ps 8 references its audience’s origin in humanity’s creation as God’s images. Verse 3 compares Yahweh’s promise to restore Zion to the garden of Eden.

3. Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 358.

4. John Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, WBC 25 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 211.

5. Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, 211.

(2) Isaiah 51:6 calls its audience to “lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look to the earth beneath,” and the author of Ps 8 proclaims the greatness of Yahweh by observing the heavens and the works of Yahweh’s fingers. (3) The word אנוש, used in Ps 8:5, appears in Isaiah only three times, twice in Isa 51:7,12 and once in Isa 56:2. The use of this term in Ps 8 and Isa 51 and 56 will be addressed in the next section. On their own, these similarities are perhaps speculative and superficial, but taken together with the themes of the exodus and יסדת עז, they are suggestive of a theological relationship between these texts.

The parallel texts of Isa 51:9 and 52:1, in which Yahweh and Israel put on עז, provide a plausible theological context in which the author of Ps 8 declared “may I serve your heavenly power/victory!” However, while Ps 8 and Isa 51-52 both contain יסד and appear to link human and divine combat, it is still unclear how the author of Ps 8 would have conceived of serving Yahweh using the verb שרת. The connection between Isa 51-52, 55, 56, and 61 will shed more light on these connections.

Isaiah 51-52, 55, 56, and 61

Looking at Isa 51-52, 56, and 61 together will help explain Ps 8’s theological connection to Isa 40-66, and the words אנוש (cf. Ps 8:5) and שרת (cf. Ps 8:2) in Isa 40-66 illuminate these connections. In Isa 40-66 the word אנוש appears only three times in Isa 51:7, 12 and 56:2. In Isa 40-66, the verb שרת appears only four times in Isa 56:6; 60:7, 10, and Isa 61:6. The word אנוש used to describe “mere humanity” in Ps 8 appears twice

in Isa 51 and once in Isa 56. In Isa 51:7, אנוש is used to describe the mere humans outside of the community of Israel that might pose a threat to them. In Isa 51:12, אנוש more broadly describes the frailty of humans and implies that Israel should not be afraid of human enemies. In Isa 56:2, אנוש is also used to describe humanity broadly, and it includes those outside of Israel. “Happy is the mortal (אנוש) who does this, the one who holds it fast, who keeps the Sabbath, not profaning it, and refrains from doing any evil.” In Isa 56:2-8, all who observe the covenant with Yahweh and keep the Sabbath will be added to the community of God. Isaiah 56:6-8, connects this inclusion of all אנוש to the service/ministry (שרת) to Yahweh.

And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord,
to minister (לשרתו) to him, to love the name of the Lord,
and to be his servants,
all who keep the Sabbath, and do not profane it,
and hold fast my covenant—
these I will bring to my holy mountain,
and make them joyful in my house of prayer;
their burnt offerings and their sacrifices
will be accepted on my altar;
for my house shall be called a house of prayer
for all peoples.
Thus says the Lord God,
who gathers the outcasts of Israel,
I will gather others to them
besides those already gathered.

The אנוש who serve (שרת) Yahweh, obey the Sabbath, and hold fast to Yahweh’s covenant—the covenant transferred from the line of David to Israel and now all אנוש (cf. Isa 42:6; 55:3; 61:8)—will join Yahweh and Yahweh’s people in glorified Zion. It seems that in Isa 56, the אנוש that were considered potential threats in Isa 51 may have the opportunity to be joined to Yahweh.

Isaiah 55, 56, and 61 all describe the idea of being joined to Yahweh in terms of covenant. Isaiah 55:3 and 61:8 both contain the phrase ברית עולם, everlasting covenant. In Isa 55:3, the everlasting covenant previously reserved for the Davidic line is applied to Israel as a whole. In Isa 61:8, this everlasting covenant is applied to those called priests of Yahweh and servants (or ministers, משרתי) of God.

but you shall be called priests of the Lord,
you shall be named ministers (משרתי) of our God;
you shall enjoy the wealth of the nations,
and in their riches you shall glory.
Because their shame was double,
and dishonor was proclaimed as their lot,
therefore they shall possess a double portion;
everlasting joy shall be theirs.
For I the Lord love justice,
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. (Isa 61:6-8)

The phrase ברית עולם does not occur in Isa 56:4-6, but here even the foreigners and eunuchs who keep Yahweh's covenant (ברית) by joining themselves to Yahweh and ministering (לשרתו) to him will join Yahweh on his holy mountain.

The relationship described here between the servant theology of Deutero-Isaiah and Trito-Isaiah shows how the promises offered to David were transferred to Israel as a whole in Isa 55:3 (cf. Isa 42:6) and then to other people (אנוש), including foreigners and eunuchs in Isa 56 and those who serve Yahweh in Isa 61. This particular relationship between the servant theology of Deutero-Isaiah and Trito-Isaiah provides a theological context in which we can more fully understand the proclamation to serve Yahweh in Ps 8. In Ps 8, the author proclaims a desire to serve (or minister to, אשרתנה) the heavenly power

of Yahweh. After going into some detail about how the author conceives of this service, participating in Yahweh's heavenly power/victory in Ps 8:3-4 (perhaps even in relationship to the Sabbath [cf. Isa 56:2, 4], as I described at the end of chapter 2), Ps 8:5-6 is in awe over Yahweh's appointment of humanity (אנוש).

What is a humankind (אנוש) that you remember it,
or a son of humanity that you appointed him,
that you made them a little less than God?
And you will crown them with glory and majesty!

Ps 8 recognized the reapplication of the Davidic mandate to Israel and its reappropriation for all humanity (אנוש) as priests and ministers (משרתי) of Yahweh, sought to participate in this movement (Ps 8:2), and expressed wonderment at Yahweh's appointment of humankind (Ps 8:5-6). In order to further illustrate the theological connections between Ps 8 and Isa, I will now show how Ps 8 and Isa 60-62 share similar motifs.

Psalm 8 and Isaiah 60-62

Scholars have frequently shown how Trito-Isaiah is dependent upon Deutero-Isaiah. Joseph Blenkinsopp argued, "Chapter 55 functions as a summation of 40-54 and a hinge between 40-54 and 56-66."⁶ In the previous section, I drew attention to one way in which the themes of Isa 40-55 are picked up by Isa 56-66. Isaiah 55 summarized the role of the servant by comparing it to Yahweh's covenant with David and applying it to Israel.

6. Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56-66*, AB 19B (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 33-34. Here Blenkinsopp also references his previous AB volume, *Isaiah 40-55*, AB 19A (New York: Doubleday, 2002), 368-69. See also Marvin Sweeney, "The Reconceptualization of the Davidic Covenant in Isaiah," in *Studies in the Book of Isaiah: Festschrift Willem A. M. Beuken*, ed. J. van Riten and M. Vervenne (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997), 42.

For example, “In Isa 42:7, Israel itself is said to have been made into a covenant with the peoples (ברית עם), which has a function similar to the democratized ברית עולם of 55:3.”⁷ Isaiah 55-66 expands on the theology of Israel as Yahweh’s servant and the recipient of the Davidic mandate in Isa 55:3 by making a universal call for being included among Yahweh’s people. The use of שרת in Isa 56 and 61 (shown above) illustrates how a small part of Isa 56-66 developed an aspect of servant theology in Isa 40-55 and the reappropriation of the Davidic mandate and expanded it by connecting it to serving Yahweh in a priest-like context. “Isaiah 61 takes up the theme of Israel being honored among the nations in ch. 55, yet its eternal covenant has no explicit connection with David.”⁸ Instead of being linked to David, the role of servant is connected to Israel’s collective roles as priests and ministers. The following comparison between Ps 8 and Isa 60-62 will show how Isa 60-62’s development of Isa 55’s servant theology is similar to Ps 8’s.

Psalm 8 and Isa 60-62 are similar in four ways: (1) Ps 8 and Isa 60-62 are both concerned with the imperial reign/majesty of Yahweh and associate it with Yahweh’s name. (2) In both Ps 8 and Isa 60-62, the promised future—in which the whole earth submits to the glory/name of Yahweh—is connected to Israel’s ability to carry out their role as Yahweh’s servants. (3) Both texts add to the role of Yahweh’s servant the vocation of priest and minister. (4) Both texts actively express Israel’s desire to carry out the role

7. Donald Polaski, *Authorizing an End The Isaiah Apocalypse and Intertextuality* (Boston: Brill, 2001), 134. Mark S. Smith, “Berit ‘am/Berit ‘olam: A new Proposal for the Crux of Isa 42:6,” *JBL* 100 (1981).

8. Polaski, *Authorizing an End*, 134.

of Yahweh's servant, to serve (or work to bring about) the glory/imperial reign of Yahweh.

The Imperial Reign of Yahweh and its Association with Yahweh's Name

Isaiah 60:1-16 proclaims that the nations will stream to Jerusalem in order to submit to Yahweh and his people Israel.⁹ In verses 1-3, Yahweh has revealed his glory by liberating his people from exile, which he shines over Israel as a sign of Yahweh's imperial reign. In 60:1-3, the glory of the Lord will make the people a light to the nations and cause the nations and their kings to come from all over the earth, which apart from Zion, is covered in darkness.

Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.
For darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the Lord will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.
Nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn. (Isa 60:1-3; cf. Isa 42:6; 49:6)

Isaiah 60:4-14 continues to list the nations and peoples who will come to Jerusalem bringing offerings to Yahweh. They will bring offerings "for the name [יְהוָה] of the Lord your God, and for the Holy One of Israel, because he has glorified you" (Isa 60:9). Isaiah 60:14 concludes that "the descendants of those who oppressed you shall come bending

9. This is the expected fulfillment of Isa 55:5: "Surely you will summon nations you know not, and nations you do not know will come running to you, because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with Splendor," and Isa 49:7, "Kings will see you and stand up, princes will see and bow down, because of the LORD, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."

low to you and all who despised you shall bow down at your feet; they shall call you the City of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.” Because Yahweh has displayed his glory/imperial reign by liberating Israel from exile, the nations come to present offerings to the name (יהוה) of Yahweh (v. 9) and even bow before Israel (v. 14).¹⁰

In Ps 8, Yahweh’s imperial reign is known in all the earth by association with Yahweh’s name (יהוה). Ps 8 begins and ends by praising the name (יהוה) of Yahweh, which is “over all the earth” (vv. 2, 10). This imperial claim for the name of Yahweh coheres with Isa 60:9, in which the nations bring offerings of silver and gold to the name (יהוה) of Yahweh. In Ps 8, the author proclaims Yahweh’s imperial reign with his “name”¹¹ over all the earth, and in Isa 60:9, the nations bring offerings to the name of Yahweh, which signals their submission to Yahweh’s imperial reign. Both texts emphasize Yahweh’s

10. This phenomenon of nations streaming to servant Israel in Zion is possible because of Isa 55:3, in which the promises offered to the Davidic king were “democratized” and applied to the people as a whole. Yahweh’s “faithful love promised to David” (Isa 55:3; cf. 2 Sam 7:12-16; Ps 89:28-37) included a covenant with the Davidic line, in which the king would act as Yahweh’s chosen representative and viceroy (e.g., Pss 2; 110) as long as he ruled according to Torah with justice and righteousness (e.g., Ps 132; 1 Chr 28:7, 9). According to this tradition, when the righteous ideal Davidide is installed in Zion, the nations will stream to him, receive his instruction, and submit to Yahweh (e.g., Isa 11:1-16). When Israel accepts their role as Yahweh’s servants, the nations will now stream to them. In Isa 60-62, this phenomenon is in service of Yahweh’s ultimate goal to reveal his glory and bring salvation to the nations through his servant Israel (Isa 62:11).

11. F. V. Reiterer, “יהוה,” Pages 128-74 in vol. 15 of *TDOT*, edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren. 15 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978). Ps 83:18, “Let them know that you alone, whose name is the Lord, are the most high over all the earth.” The name of Yahweh is praised in association with his victory of cosmic foes in Ps 89: 8-16. Also, Ps 74 recounts the acts of Yahweh “from of old” in verses 12-17. Then in verse 18, the enemy scoffs at, and the impious revile, Yahweh’s name. In verse 21, the psalmist appeals to Yahweh in a time of hardship, on behalf of the “poor and needy,” who praise the name of Yahweh. Psalm 99 depicts Yahweh as the imperial God who reigns from Zion, which calls for the praise of his name (v. 3). In Ps 122, the tribes go to Jerusalem to praise the name of Yahweh. In Ps 66, Yahweh’s reign is supreme, and all the earth praises Yahweh’s name. In Ps 102:18-22, Yahweh is called upon to free the prisoners so that the name of the Lord may be declared in Zion. Isa 64:1 associates Yahweh’s power with his name, as all fear it. See Pss 54, 86, and 106 for making Yahweh’s power known in relationship to his name.

imperial reign over all the earth. Psalm 8 praises Yahweh for his imperial reign, and Isa 60:1-14 depicts its impact on the nations.¹²

Israel as the New “Davidic”¹³ Servants and the Promised Future

Next, Isa 60:15-22 describes how Yahweh plans to make good on the promise of Isa 60:1-14 by securing and prospering the city and raising up Israel as his new “Davidic” servant.¹⁴ First, verses 15-16 introduce how Yahweh plans to help Israel take on their new Davidic role. Verse 15 refers to Israel’s liberation from exile. “Whereas you have been forsaken and hated, with no one passing through, I will make you majestic forever, a joy from age to age.” Then, verse 16 portrays Israel as a nursing infant, as Israel must be weaned into this new royal servant relationship with Yahweh and learn what it requires: “You shall suck the milk of nations, you shall suck the breasts of kings; and you shall know that I, the Lord, am your Savior and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.”

Isaiah 60:15-16 acknowledges that even though Israel had been forsaken in exile, Yahweh is now nursing them back to prominence. “Drinking the milk of nations” (v. 16a) refers to the inpouring wealth from the peoples streaming to Zion in the preceding verses (Isa 60:1-14). The image also suggests that Israel, formerly forsaken, will not have

12. Isa 60:1-14 describes the fulfillment of Yahweh’s promise in Isa 49:6-7, mirroring the picture of Yahweh’s servant Davidic king in Isa 11:10, in which the nations stream to Zion to submit to Yahweh and his king. However, the role is now applied to Israel as a whole (Isa 55:3-5).

13. I am using “Davidic” in quotation marks to signal the origin of Israel’s new servant role and their elevated status, which Isa 60-62 and Ps 8 describe using royal language.

14. Fulfilling the role of Yahweh’s new “Davidic” servants requires that their lives are characterized by righteousness, and that they do justice, so that Yahweh continues to reveal his glory through them. This is because Israel is now the recipient of the Davidic mandate (cf. Ps 132).

enemies take their sustenance from them again (cf. Isa 62:8, “Never again will I give your grain as food for your enemies”). “Nursing (or sucking) at the breasts of kings” (v. 16b) emphasizes the nature of Israel’s exaltation, having received the Davidic mandate, typically reserved for the Davidic king. Because of the enemies who exiled, degraded, and stole from Israel, Yahweh’s new servant Israel will be “nursed” until they reach their new royal Davidic status.¹⁵

Next, Isa 60:19-22 reiterates Deutero-Isaiah’s promise to glorify Israel as Yahweh’s new royal Davidic servant. First, Yahweh is going to be their glory (60:19) and end their mourning (60:20). Then, the people will be righteous,¹⁶ they will maintain control of the land (60:21a), and Yahweh will display his glory through them. “They are

15. Here, I want to speculate about another possibility for the image of nursing babes in Ps 8 that differs from what I have argued in this thesis. In light of the arguments made in this chapter, it is possible that the mouths of nursing babes might refer to new generations of Yahweh’s people that Yahweh will establish after the exile. If this is the case, it could be that from the mouths of nursing Israelites Yahweh is establishing his royal Davidic servants. This includes establishing a “stronghold” (according to Ps 8:3) for Israel, on account of what their enemies did to them in exile, which is what Isa 60:17-18 describes. In the language of Ps 8:3, Isa 60:16-18 describes the “stronghold” that Yahweh is establishing “from the mouths of nursing infants [or nursing Israelites].” The stronghold then in Ps 8 would refer to Yahweh’s edification of the city with wealth, peace, righteousness (Isa 60:17), and safety from enemies (Isa 60:18). This parallel is highly suggestive because of the emphasis on the offspring of Yahweh’s servant throughout Isa 40-66. See, for example, Marvin Sweeney, “The Reconceptualization of the Davidic Covenant in Isaiah,” 42. Here, Sweeney writes,

Trito-Isaiah speaks explicitly of the ‘servants of YHWH’ only in 56,6; 63,17; 65,8.9.15; 66,13.14, but develops this theme in association with the notions of the “seed” or “offspring” who will inherit the covenant of YHWH and the “righteousness” of the servants who will be vindicated when YHWH’s sovereignty is manifested in Zion. In this regard, Trito-Isaiah develops the image of the servant in Isa 53,10 who will ultimately see his offspring prosper.

In my view, this parallel between Ps 8:3 (“from the mouths of nursing babes (נִקְחָ), you have established a stronghold) and Isa 60:16 (“You shall suck (נִקְחָ) the milk of nations, you shall suck the breasts of kings and you shall know that I, the Lord, am your Savior and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.”) is not as likely as the parallel with *CAT 1.23* and the newborn goodly gods. I might tentatively suggest then that perhaps the initial composition of Ps 8 had the Ugaritic text in mind, but later the nursing babes of Ps 8 could have been associated with the offspring of the servant in Trito-Isaiah, but this is highly speculative.

16. This is a requirement of the Davidic mandate and will be addressed in the next section in its application to Israel.

the shoot I have planted, the work of my hands, for the display of my [glory (פאר)]”¹⁷ (v. 21b NIV).¹⁸ Here, Yahweh calls Israel “the shoot” that Yahweh has planted, echoing Isa 11:1a:¹⁹ “A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse.” This image, connected with Israel’s nursing at the breasts of kings, signals Israel’s new royal Davidic servant status in their displaying of Yahweh’s glory. The section concludes with the assurance that Yahweh is going to “do this swiftly” (v. 22). This assures Israel of future well being in the midst of their difficult circumstances and that their acceptance of the Davidic mandate and their roles as Yahweh’s royal Davidic servants is part of their journey toward this promised future.

The author of Ps 8 sought to accept the new role as Yahweh’s servant (i.e., Ps 8:2b) and describes the creation of the royal servant and its development into the future in verses 6-7, with the verbal chiasm proposed in chapter 1 of the thesis.

- 5) What is a humankind that you remember it,
or a son of humanity that you appointed him,
- 6) that you made them a little less than God?
And you will crown them with glory and majesty!
- 7) You will make them rule over the works of your hands;
you put everything underneath his feet.

In Ps 8:5-7, Yahweh is appointing humanity to serve as stewards of the creation in a royal way. Humans were made a little less than God as God’s representatives, and Yahweh will crown them with glory and majesty and make them to rule over the created order.

17. The verb used to depict Israel’s display of glory is פאר. Many translations render this verb “to display splendor,” a synonym of glory that includes the the visual component of light associated with glory (cf. Isa 60:1). For the sake of clarity, I have changed the translation throughout from “splendor” to “glory.”

18. Here, I use the NIV because it emphasizes the outer display of Yahweh’s glory as apposed to just Yahweh being glorified.

19. Sweeney, “The Reconceptualization of the Davidic Covenant in Isaiah,” 43. Here Sweeny cites a number of works that point out a relationship between Isa 11:1-16 and Trito-Isaiah.

Crowning humanity with glory and majesty signals the royal nature of this appointment. The list of creatures in verses 8-9 that humanity has now-but-not-yet dominion over includes the watery chaos monster, which a member of the Davidic line was made to rule over in Ps 89. The promised future in Ps 8 is that even humans, like Yahweh (and his formerly ideal Davidic representative) will subdue Leviathan under their feet (cf. Isa 27).

Isaiah 60:21 points us to the next section by hinting at how Israel will serve Yahweh's heavenly power/victory/imperial reign by saying, "Then all your people will be righteous and they will possess the land forever. They are the shoot I have planted, the work of my hands, for the display of my" [glory (פאר)]. Similar to Yahweh's ideal Davidic king (discussed in chapter 2; e.g., Pss 18, 89, 132; cf. Isa 11:1-11), Israel's ability to display Yahweh's glory is connected to their righteousness as Yahweh's royal Davidic servants in Ps 8 and Isa 60-62.

The Practical Role of the Royal "Davidic" Servant as Royal Minister

Paul Hanson argues that the mention of Israel's righteousness in Isa 60:21 (introduced above) signals that the people's faithfulness "is a crucial part"²⁰ of their journey toward the fulfillment of Yahweh's promises. This development becomes clearer in Isa 61, which explains the practical role of Yahweh's new royal servant as a royal priest/minister. In Isa 61, Yahweh's glorious reign appears "among the servant people as they, through their acts of mercy and their witness to Torah, hasten the coming

20. Paul Hanson, *Isaiah 40-66*, IBC (Louisville: John Knox, 1989), 223. See also Brevard Childs, *Isaiah*; OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 499-500.

of God's" promises.²¹ Isaiah 61 clarifies how the people's acts of mercy and commitment to Torah contribute toward Yahweh's display of glory/imperial reign through Israel.²² When the people's acts of mercy and commitment to Torah promote the glory of Yahweh, they promote Yahweh's imperial reign and victory throughout the earth. This is how the author of Ps 8 conceived of serving the power/victory of Yahweh.

The first-person voice in Isa 61:1-3 identifies as Yahweh's servant using the language of Isa 42:1 ("Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations" [Isa 42:1]), saying "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners" (Isa 61:1). Hanson says that "By applying the words used to describe the Servant of the Lord in 42:1 to a new situation, some person or group [in Isa 61ff.] seems to be claiming inheritance of the office of that important figure in Deutero-Isaiah's prophecy."²³ Scott Starbuck similarly describes this inheritance of the servant role in Isa 61 as the "communalization" of the Davidic covenant.²⁴ Starbuck identifies this reappropriation of the role formerly reserved for the line of David with the clothing of the servant in Isa 61:10, "for he has clothed me

21. Hanson, *Isaiah, 40-66*, 223.

22. This coheres with making "righteousness and peace spring up before all nations" (Isa 61:11).

23. Hanson, 223. See also Goldingay, *Isaiah 56-66*; ICC (New York: T&T Clark, 2014), 291-92. The ambiguity of the identity of the servants leaves a number of possibilities. Baltzer identifies the servant as Moses in Isa 42. Klaus Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah: A Commentary on Isaiah 40-55*, trans. Margaret Kohl, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2001), 125-26. However, Moses is not named.

24. Scott Starbuck, "Disrobing an Isaianic Metaphor הַעֲרִיב צְדָקָה as Power Transfer in Isaiah 61:10," 143-59 in *Dress and Clothing in the Hebrew Bible: "For All Her Household are Clothed in Crimson,"* LHBOTS 679, (New York: T&T Clark, 2019), 152-155.

with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness מְעִיל צְדָקָה.” He shows how this less common word for robe is used in both royal and priestly situations. The word מְעִיל is used for garments necessary for the priesthood in Exodus (Exod 28:4, 31, 34, 29:5, 39:22-26)²⁵ and is used to signify changes in Samuel’s royal and priestly status.²⁶ This word for robe also connects Isa 61:10 with Isa 59:17. In 59:16-17, Yahweh

...saw that there was no one,
and was appalled that there was no one to intervene;
so his own arm brought him victory,
and his righteousness upheld him.
He put on righteousness like a breastplate,
and a helmet of salvation on his head;
he put on garments of vengeance for clothing,
and wrapped himself in fury as in a mantle (מְעִיל).

In 61:10, the servant(s) declares,

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe (מְעִיל) of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

Based on parallel word clusters between Isa 59:16-17 and Isa 61, Starbuck argues that in Trito-Isaiah,

25. Starbuck, “Disrobing an Isaianic Metaphor,” 147-48.

26. Starbuck, “Disrobing an Isaianic Metaphor,” 149-50. Starbuck shows how the מְעִיל appears to place a significant role in the Samuel narrative.

Significantly, Hannah brings a מְעִיל to the boy Samuel each year. This term first appears in the Samuel cycle after Hannah’s song, which concludes with “The Lord will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to his king and exalt the power of his anointed (1 Sam 2:28),” a propoleptic anticipation of the rise of kingship within Israel. Ten verses earlier, a dual notice is made that Samuel was ministering before YHWH dressed in a linen ephod, and each year, his mother would bring him a small מְעִיל.

He also notes that Saul rips Samuel’s מְעִיל in two in 1 Sam 15:27, which represented “the tearing of the kingdom away from Saul as well as ripping executive authority from Samuel, who up until this point has been the uncontested leader of Israel in his roles of prophet, priest, judge.”

a poetic argument is voiced that the community of Isa 61 is equipped through a metaphorical robing, to serve as the instruments of salvation and righteousness in a redeemed Jerusalem. To the extent that the community is “robed” in this way, it would seem that they participate in the royal office of deliverance and justice.²⁷

The parallel here between Yahweh and the servant being dressed with a קָעִיל brings to mind the parallel between Isa 51:9 and Isa 52:1, in which both Yahweh and Zion/Jerusalem put on strength (לְבָשׂוּ עֹז). In both sets of parallels, the dressing of Yahweh and his people (and or Yahweh’s city) leads to a transfer of power that attempts to equip the people to participate in Yahweh’s re-ordering of the world as they know it. With Starbuck’s argument in mind, I will consider the rest of Isa 61 and the themes of Yahweh’s servant as royal priest/minister.

The shared description of the spirit coming upon the servant in Isa 42 and 61 has royal overtones as the spirit also descends upon kings when they are anointed, and kings also bear the responsibility of releasing captives, bringing comfort, and allowing for

190. Starbuck, “Disrobing an Isaianic metaphor,” 153. See pp. 152-53 for the details of Starbuck’s argument. He points out a number of verb clusters between Isa 59:17 and Isa 61.

transformation (e.g., Ps 72).²⁸ In addition, while listing the acts of justice and righteousness of the servant in verses 1-3, the text connects this ministry with the new royal Davidic servant status of Israel, who—by living into this righteous royalized role—will display/mediate Yahweh’s glory/imperial reign. In Isa 61:3, serving the people of Zion is what leads to the crowning of Israel:

and provide for those who grieve in Zion—
to bestow on them a crown of beauty
instead of ashes,
the oil of joy
instead of mourning,
and a garment of praise
instead of a spirit of despair.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
a planting of the Lord
for the display of his [glory (פאר)]. (Isa 61:3 NIV²⁹).

28. John Goldingay, *Isaiah 56-66*, 291. Also, Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 126-27. Baltzer sees Isa 42 combing royal themes with the servant theology, but Baltzer also connects this to Moses (Although Baltzer’s identification of Moses in Deutero-Isaiah has not commended itself to everyone). Baltzer writes (126-27),

When the OT talks about individuals being chosen by God, this probably refers initially to the kings. It is God’s free resolve that distinguishes, legitimates and binds the chosen one. So it is astonishing when, in contrast to the ideology of kingship, Israel is called “servant” in 41:8 and is described as “chosen” (also 45:4). In the present text as well, the two declarations are linked to one another. Psalm 106:23 stresses that Moses is Yahweh’s chosen one, and in that passage this is the precondition that makes it possible for Moses to intercede with Yahweh on behalf of his people in the catastrophe of the golden calf. It could well be that the catchword in Ps 106:23 is already a reference to the tradition: “Moses who turns away destruction”—the tradition that then plays an important part in the Servant of God texts.

If the author of Ps 8 is imagining the service of Yahweh by combining myth and ritual in a priestly context, I might speculate that Ps 8 has Moses in mind when it considers humanity’s role in participating in conflict with cosmic foes. This possible connection with Moses as Yahweh’s servant in the confrontation with Pharaoh (who is mythologized as a sea monster in Ezek 29:3; 32:2) might possibly help us better understand the psalmist’s desire to serve Yahweh’s heavenly power against cosmic foes. While Moses is not explicitly portrayed as a king, the Moses tradition does share royal motifs with kings in the ancient Near East. For this, see Danny Mathews, *Royal Motifs in the Pentateuchal Portrayal of Moses*, LHBOTS 571 (London: Bloomsbury/T&T Clark, 2012). If Ps 8 is interacting with concepts of kingship displayed in the Moses tradition, then perhaps Ps 8 is appropriating these divinely appointed king-like qualities of Moses to all humanity, as newly appointed representatives of Yahweh. Unfortunately, there is not space to entertain these speculations in this thesis.

29. I use the NIV here because I prefer the translation of “crown of beauty” over “garland” (NRSV).

Here, the acts of service to those in need are connected to Israel's royal exaltation (receiving a "crown of beauty") and to the ability to display Yahweh's glory.

In Isa 61:1-4, proclaiming good news to the poor, binding up the brokenhearted, and rebuilding the city (perhaps the temple is also implied here in v. 4) help reveal Yahweh's glory. Next, perhaps because of the emphasis on rebuilding in verse 4, verses 5-6 describe Israel's servant role as priests and ministers. Verse 5 claims that Israel will no longer toil in fields—foreigners will do that for them (a sign of Israel's new royal Davidic status and Yahweh's imperial reign).³⁰ Instead, Yahweh promises to Israel, "you shall be called priests of the Lord, you shall be named ministers (מְשָׁרְתֵי) of our God, you shall enjoy the wealth of the nations, and in their riches you shall glory" (v. 6).³¹ Then verses 7-9 elaborate on how Yahweh is going to "reward [his] people and make an everlasting covenant with them." As I mentioned above, this promise to make an "everlasting covenant" with Israel is likely an allusion to Isa 55:3b, "I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David." In Isa 61's reappropriation of the Davidic mandate, Israel's role as Yahweh's servants includes the designations of priests and ministers.

Next, the author concludes in verses 10-11 by praising Yahweh for this royal/priestly exaltation of Israel (v. 10) and by pointing toward the promised future of prosperity (v. 11). Verse 10 returns to the first-person voice of the servant, "I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God." Then, the servant combines the royal

30. This signals Yahweh's imperial rule and is perhaps connected to the royal imagery above.

31. One of the fundamental callings in Israel's history is to be "a priestly kingdom and a holy nation" (Exod 19:6). Yahweh's new task for Israel is still rooted in the Mosaic one.

imagery of decorating the royal Davidic servant with the position of priest/minister: “For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels” (NIV).³² This imagery combines the royal and priestly exaltation of Israel.

In Isa 61:1-10, the role of Yahweh’s new Davidic servants is to be ministers (משרתים)³³ of Yahweh, serving with justice and righteousness in order to display the glory/imperial reign of Yahweh, which will bring about the promised future in which the nations stream to Zion. Verse 11 describes this promised future as Yahweh’s causing “righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.” All nations becoming righteous and praising Yahweh summarizes the socio-ethical conditions for Yahweh’s glory/imperial reign; Yahweh’s royal Davidic servant displays/mediates Yahweh’s glory/imperial reign by bringing about these conditions. The perceived ability of Yahweh’s servant in Isa 60-61 to act as priest and minister in a way that brings about a new social order leads us back to the priestly theology described above at the end of Chapter 2, “that in the ritual building and rededication of the temple . . . humans participate in the divine ordering of the world. In sacred space and time, Israel proleptically participates in the defeat of chaos and the transformation of chaos into order.”³⁴ Similarly, Marvin Sweeney

32. I use the NIV’s translation here because of how it captures the royal/priestly language. Instead of “bridegroom adorns his head like a priest,” NRSV translates “bridegroom decks himself with garland.”

33. The plural here is significant because the whole collective is serving Yahweh. In Ps 8, the speaker calls out in the singular voice, but on behalf of humanity, “What is humankind that you remember it?” Ps 8:5.

34. Perdue, *Reconstructing Old Testament Theology*, 188. Here, Perdue is explaining Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 121-27, esp. 127.

writes that, as “heirs to the eternal covenant of David,” the servants of Yahweh in Isa 56-66 look to become recipients of great power, “to fulfill a priestly or cultic role in relation to the larger world order being established by YHWH at Zion.”³⁵

In this section, I have shown how Yahweh’s servants appear as up-and-coming royal priestly figures who have inherited the everlasting Davidic covenant from Isa 42 and 55. The role of these משרתים (Isa 56 and 61) was envisioned to help bring about the restoration and establishment of Yahweh’s people in Zion. The author of Ps 8 desired to accept the role of Yahweh’s new royal servant minister (אשרתנה), in order to help bring about this promised future.

Before moving to the next section on Isa 62 and Ps 8, there is one more item to consider. If Ps 8 is participating in the Isaianic servant theology, why is it that Ps 8 does not use the word for Yahweh’s servants עבד, which appears twenty-seven times in Isa 40-66?

עבד and שרת

In this thesis, I have claimed that the author of Ps 8 desired to fulfill the role of Yahweh’s servant in Isa 55:3 as it was expanded by Isa 56 and 61. In Isaiah, the root עבד is used to talk about the servants of Yahweh, not שרת. In Isaiah, שרת is used only four times in the instances mentioned above (Isa 56:6; 60:7, 10, and 61:6). If Ps 8 was

35. Sweeney, “The Reconceptualization of the Davidic Covenant in Isa,” 59. Sweeney does not necessarily have the myth/ritual and the maintenance of the cosmic harmony in mind, but the relationship between the cult and world order that he presents still participates in the same idea: that the cult affects the bigger picture, even if it is narrower in scope.

interacting with the servant tradition in Isaiah, why did Ps 8 use a form of שרת instead of עבד? One objection to the proposal that Ps 8 and Isa 61 discuss a similar role of Yahweh's servant is that the word used for Yahweh's servants in the text of Isaiah, עבד, is conspicuously absent in both. This actually strengthens my argument regarding the connection between Ps 8 and Isa 60-62. The parallel between Isa 61:1-3 and 42:1-3 indicates that Isa 60-62 is discussing the role of Yahweh's servant in Isa 40-55; however, instead of using עבד, both Ps 8 and Isa 61 use שרת (Isa 61:6 and Ps 8:2b). This could be explained by the felt need for the restoration of the temple cult as שרת often occurs in the context of conducting cultic-related service associated with Yahweh, priests, and temple worship (see ch. 1). Isaiah 56:6-7a is perhaps a helpful text for understanding this shift from עבד to שרת in Ps 8 and Isa 61.

And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord,
to minister to him (לשרתו), to love the name of the Lord,
and to be his servants (עבדים),
all who keep the Sabbath, and do not profane it,
and hold fast my covenant—
these I will bring to my holy mountain,
and make them joyful in my house of prayer. (Isa 56:6-7a)

Here, שרת appears in parallelism with עבד, suggesting that the two words function similarly. Isa 56:6-7 also suggests (perhaps) that ministering to/serving (לשרתו) Yahweh in certain ways is part of what leads to becoming Yahweh's servants (עבדים). In Ps 101:6, uprightness is a prerequisite for serving (לשרת) the king as “the one whose walk is blameless will minister (לְשָׁרֵת) to me” (cf. Ps 101:4-7). The use of שרת here seems to cohere with the motivation in Isa 60-62 that the faithful persistence of the people allows

them to function as Yahweh's servants in the service of revealing Yahweh's glory and the fulfillment of Deutero-Isaiah's promises.

Viewing Ps 8 alongside Isa 60-62 and its first person proclamations (cf. Isa 42:1-3) illuminates a shared motif for understanding the statement "may I serve" in Ps 8:2b. The desire to serve (שרת or minister) becomes clearer, if understood in light of the promise in Isa 61:6, "but you shall be called priests of the Lord, you shall be named ministers of [משרתי] our God." In Ps 8:2b, the psalmist desires to serve Yahweh's heavenly power/victory in the sense that the psalmist desires to help bring about Yahweh's imperial reign and the restoration of Zion by living into the role of Yahweh's royal "Davidic" servant as Yahweh's minister (משרתיים). Psalm 8, however, ties the socio-ethical conditions of Yahweh's reign to Gen 1's mandate for humans to manage creation and the works of Yahweh's hands and Yahweh's/humanity's (mythological) struggle to keep the forces of chaos at bay.³⁶ The desire for Yahweh's servants to serve Yahweh's power/victory/imperial reign is more explicit in Isa 62.

The Desire to Serve Yahweh's Heavenly Power/Victory

In Isa 62, the speaker is persistent in calling upon Yahweh to make good on the promises discussed above in Isa 60-61. Isa 62 begins, "For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out like the

36. Job Jindo, "Some Reflections on Interpreting Allusion: The Case of Creation Motifs in Isaiah," in *Inner Biblical Allusion in the Poetry of Wisdom and Psalms*, LHBOTS 659, eds. Claudia Verse Camp and Andrew Mein (New York: T&T Clark, 2019), 133-165. Jindo connects the ideal Davidic vision of Isa 11 with the primordial history of Gen 1-11. This may provide a similar case as Ps 8, where Davidic ideals are combined with priestly creation theology.

dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch” (Isa 62:1). In the following verse, the author describes the exaltation of Israel that contributes toward the fulfillment of Yahweh’s promise to vindicate and restore Zion. First, verse 2a refers to the imperial reign of Yahweh, made known through the liberation of Israel: “The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory.” Then, in verses 2b-3, the author describes the new royal Davidic servant role of the people: “And you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will give. You shall be a crown (עֲטָרָה; cf. Ps 8:6) of [glory (תְּפִאָּרָה)] in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.” Starbuck identifies parallels between Isa 62:1-5 and Isa 61:10, such as “marriage, royalty, and joy,” that suggest the same type of “power transfer” in 62:1-5 as occurred in 61:10; however, instead of describing this transfer in terms of “eternal covenant,” the aspects of the covenant are implied through “claiming, renaming, and espousing the remnant community.”³⁷

Next, Isa 62:6-7 returns to the people’s cry for Yahweh to make good on these promises.

Upon your walls, O Jerusalem,
 I have posted sentinels;
 all day and all night
 they shall never be silent.
 You who remind the Lord,
 take no rest,
 and give him no rest
 until he establishes Jerusalem
 and makes it renowned throughout the earth. (Isa 62:6-7)

37. Starbuck, “Disrobing an Isaianic Metaphor,” 157.

Even though the speaker is putting the burden on Yahweh to act in 62:1 and 6-7, Isa 62:10 emphasizes human participation in the fulfillment of Yahweh's promises. Isaiah 62:10 declares, "Go through, go through the gates, prepare the way for the people; build up, build up the highway, clear it of stones, lift up an ensign over the peoples." It is striking that this command to Yahweh's servants is uttered in a context in which the exiles have already returned. Hanson explains that "the journey, in a literal sense has been completed; they are in Judah. But in a metaphorical sense, they have a long way to go. The Master's word becomes an admonition to persevere in both faith and hard work as instruments of God's redeeming purpose."³⁸

The persistence in petitioning Yahweh to reveal his glory/imperial reign and fulfill his promises in Isa 62:1, 6-7, combined with the desire of Yahweh's servants to work as instruments of God in Isa 62:10, illustrate the kind of desire expressed in Ps 8:2b to carry out the role of Yahweh's royal Davidic servant. The community of Isa 60-62 petitions Yahweh unceasingly, eager to do their part as Yahweh's servants, having realized that the hope of an ideal Davidic king ushering in the just and peaceful reign of Yahweh has become the responsibility of all Yahweh's servants. Psalm 8 represents a similar kind of petition, using like-minded motifs as Isa 60-62. It is with this type of unbridled enthusiasm and desire to persevere in the service of revealing Yahweh's glory that Ps 8:2b proclaims "May I serve your heavenly power/victory!"

Before concluding this chapter, I should address another difference in vocabulary between Ps 8 and Isa 40-66. Psalm 8 wishes to serve or promote the majesty/reign of

38. Hanson, *Isaiah 40-66*, 229.

Yahweh by serving Yahweh's על־השמים הוד. In chapter 1, I explained that הוד means power/victory in Ps 8. However, הוד does not appear in Isa 40-66. When Yahweh's servants display the glory of Yahweh in Isa 60-62, the word פאר is used. Next, I will show why Ps 8 uses הוד instead of פאר.

פאר and הוד

A possible objection to my proposal that Ps 8 is influenced by an aspect of Isaiah servant theology is that the word for power/victory in Ps 8:2b, הוד, does not occur in Isa 40-66. In fact, הוד appears only once in Isaiah, in 30:30. Importantly, however, this text helps shed additional light on the word's meaning and Ps 8's use of הוד in relationship to Isa 60-62. The NRSV translates Isa 30:30-32,

And the Lord will cause his majestic (הוד) voice to be heard and the descending blow of his arm to be seen, in furious anger and a flame of devouring fire, with a cloudburst and tempest and hailstones. The Assyrian will be terror-stricken at the voice of the Lord, when he strikes with his rod. And every stroke of the staff of punishment that the Lord lays upon him will be to the sound of timbrels and lyres; battling with brandished arm he will fight with him.

As I noted in chapter 1, הוד is not always easy to translate, and this is the case in Isa 30:30. The NASB translates הוד קולו as "his voice of authority." The ASV translates "his glorious voice." The YLT translates "the honour of his voice." The NCV translates "his great voice." The NET translates more freely, "The LORD will give a mighty shout." These varying translations highlight the difficulty of הוד. In Isa 30-32, Yahweh's הוד קול accompanies the blow of Yahweh's arm, furious anger, devouring fire, and hailstones.

Yahweh's voice leaves the Assyrian terror-stricken (NRSV). In the context, the translation of הוד that I have provided for Ps 8 actually seems best. I would translate "his powerful voice," for the voice accompanies sheer power that punishes Yahweh's enemies. While majesty, authority, glory, honor, greatness, and mightiness could instill fear within an enemy, it seems to me that a powerful voice, with the descending blow of Yahweh's arm, is most likely to fill Yahweh's enemies with terror. J. J. M. Roberts argues that יהת (the niphal imperfect third-person masculine singular of חתת) in Isa 30:31 can also mean "be shattered" and translates, given the context of Yahweh's using his arm as a club, "For at the voice of Yahweh Assyria will be shattered, when he beats with the rod."³⁹ This understanding supports my reading of הוד even further. If Yahweh's הוד קול carries with it the force to shatter enemies, then "powerful voice" seems like an appropriate translation of הוד in this context.

This use of הוד in Isa 30 is instructive for Ps 8 as the author desires to serve Yahweh's הוד עליהשמים and Isa 30:30-32 describes the power of Yahweh's voice and descending blow of Yahweh's arm, accompanied with flame, hail, and destructive heavenly power.⁴⁰ While this use of הוד in Isa 30 coheres with what I have argued in chapter 1, it does not resolve the fact that הוד does not appear in chapters 40-66.

The word הוד, however, can also mean glory. When Yahweh displays his glory though Yahweh's servants in Isa 60-62, the verb is פאר (to display glory). In Isa 40-62 the verb פאר always relates to Israel's display of glory. The verb פאר occurs eight times in Isa

39. J. J. M. Roberts, *First Isaiah: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Fortress, 2015), 397-99.

40. Isa 30:32's description of Yahweh's punishment to the sound of music could be reminiscent of chapter 1's analysis of 1 Chron 16, where שרת and הוד appear in close proximity, as those משרתים sang of Yahweh's superiority.

40-62 (Isa 44:23; 49:3; 55:5; 60:7, 9, 13, 21; 61:3), all in the context of Yahweh's displaying his glory through his people. The feminine noun form תְּפִאָּרַת (glory) occurs six times in Isa 40-62 (Isa 44:13; 46:13; 52:1; 60:7, 19; 62:3), all of which relate to Israel or the sanctuary. The masculine noun form פָּאֵר occurs twice in Isa 40-62 and represents a crown or head dress upon Yahweh's servants (Isa 61:3, 10).

Isaiah frequently uses the word פֶּאֵר to talk about the glory of Yahweh. Psalm 8 uses the word הוֹד to talk about Yahweh's heavenly power/victory, but הוֹד is not disconnected from Yahweh's glory. The word הוֹד (also meaning glory) is often used to describe Yahweh's imperial glory, brought about by his great deeds. Psalm 96, is a good example of this (cf. Pss 104:1; 111:3; 145:5; 148:13). Like Ps 8, Ps 96 calls all the earth to praise the name (שֵׁם) of Yahweh (vv. 1-2) and declares Yahweh's glory over all the nations (v. 3). Psalm 96:4-5 exemplifies Yahweh's imperial claim over other gods of the nations. Then, verse 6 depicts Yahweh in his universal reign: "Splendor (הוֹד) and majesty (הִדָּר) are before him; strength (עֹז) and glory (תְּפִאָּרַת) are in his sanctuary." Here, the nouns הוֹד and הִדָּר used to describe Yahweh's glorious reign in the first verset are likened to עֹז (strength) and תְּפִאָּרַת (glory) in the the second verset. Here we see that הוֹד and פֶּאֵר can function together. However, הוֹד is before Yahweh, and תְּפִאָּרַת is in the sanctuary. In the context of the proclamation of Yahweh's rule over other nations and their gods in verses 1-5, Ps 96:6 describes Yahweh's הוֹד (splendor/glory) and הִדָּר (majesty) as his "companion powers" that exemplify strength and glory (v. 6b). Warmuth says that Yahweh's glory (הוֹד) and majesty (הִדָּר) here "stand as servants before God"⁴¹ and

41. Kiel Warmuth, "הוֹד *hod*." TDNT 3: 352-356, 353.

contribute toward the universal dominion of Yahweh proclaimed in the psalm. This use of הוד as a “companion power” of Yahweh seems to fit with the idea that Yahweh’s servant, crowned with the glory and majesty (כבוד והדר), could serve or promote this “companion power.” In this thesis, I have argued that serving in the sanctuary and putting on strength (e.g., Isa 51:9; 52:1) promotes the glory and power of Yahweh. In Ps 96:6, strength and glory (תפראת) are in the sanctuary in verse 6b, which underlines the הוד of Yahweh in verse 6a. In Ps 8:2b, the ministry (אשרתנה) of Yahweh’s servant promotes Yahweh’s heavenly power/victory (הודך עליהשמים).

Here we see how הוד is strongly associated with Yahweh’s imperial reign. Above, I have shown how the establishment of this reign is parallel to the revealing of Yahweh’s glory and the fulfillment of Yahweh’s promises to Israel. In Isa 60-62, Israel displays Yahweh’s glory (פאר) in the service of Yahweh’s imperial power, coinciding with Yahweh’s victory over enemies. While the word הוד can function similarly to פאר, the word הוד more emphatically represents Yahweh’s imperial glory, power, and victory, and Ps 8 used הוד because of its concern with the service of Yahweh in the ongoing struggle with cosmic foes (see ch. 1).

Summary

In this chapter, I have shown how the servant theology in Isa 56-66 that extends and develops certain themes of Isa 40-55⁴² informs the theology of Ps 8. The shared

42. I am adapting this methodology from Lyons, “Psalm 22 and the ‘Servants’ of Isaiah 54,” 647.

vocabulary in Isa 51-52, 55, 56, and 61 helps explain the theology of Ps 8. Isaiah 51 and Ps 8 both both use the verb יסד for the establishment of creation/stability with עז as the power necessary to keep the forces of chaos at bay. In doing so, Isa 51-52 and Ps 8 both link human action with divine combat, contain references to Genesis, cause the hearer to look to the heavens, and feature the uncommon word אנוש (Isa 51:7, 12). The word אנוש appears again in Isa 56:6-8, where we start to see the word שרת being used in addition to עבד (used in Isa 40-55) to describe the servants of Yahweh. This is an important text for identifying Trito-Isaiah's priestly acceptance (שרת) of the servant role (עבד) applied to Israel as a whole in Deutero-Isaiah. Psalm 8 also represents the priestly acceptance (אשרתנה) of the servant role in Isaiah. Isa 55, 56, and 61 discuss the reappropriation of the Davidic mandate in terms of covenant. The relationship described here between the servant theology of Deutero-Isaiah and Trito-Isaiah, in which the promises offered to David were transferred to Israel as a whole in Isa 55:3 (cf. Isa 42:6) and then to other people (אנוש), including foreigners and eunuchs in Isa 56 and those who serve Yahweh in Isa 61, provides a theological context in which we can more fully understand the proclamation to serve Yahweh in Ps 8.

Isa 60-62 develops this servant theology further and provides more insight to the practical role of the servants in Ps 8. Psalm 8 and Isa 60-62 are similar in four ways: (1) Ps 8 and Isa 60-62 are both concerned with the imperial reign/majesty of Yahweh and associate it with Yahweh's name. (2) In both Ps 8 and Isa 60-62, the promised future—in which the whole earth submits to the glory/name of Yahweh—is connected to Israel's ability to carry out their role as Yahweh's servants. (3) Both texts add to the role of

Yahweh's servant the vocation of priest and minister. (4) Both texts actively express Israel's desire to carry out the role of Yahweh's servant, to serve (or work to bring about) the glory/imperial reign of Yahweh. These four parallels show that Israel's ability to display Yahweh's glory is connected to their righteousness. Isa 61 clarifies how the people's acts of mercy and commitment to Torah contribute toward Yahweh's display of glory/imperial reign through Israel.⁴³ When the people's acts of mercy and commitment to Torah promote the glory of Yahweh, they promote Yahweh's imperial reign and victory throughout the earth. This is how the author of Ps 8 conceived of serving the power/victory of Yahweh. All nations becoming righteous and praising Yahweh summarizes the socio-ethical conditions for Yahweh's glory/imperial reign; Yahweh's royal Davidic servant displays/mediates Yahweh's glory/imperial reign by bringing about these conditions. The perceived ability of Yahweh's servant in Isa 60-61 to act as priest and minister in a way that brings about a new social order leads us back to the priestly theology described above at the end of chapter 2, "that in the ritual building and rededication of the temple . . . humans participate in the divine ordering of the world. In sacred space and time, Israel proleptically participates in the defeat of chaos and the transformation of chaos into order."⁴⁴

In Isa 60-62, Yahweh's servants appear as up-and-coming royal priestly figures, who have inherited the everlasting Davidic covenant from Isa 42 and 55. The role of these משרתים (Isa 56 and 61) was envisioned to help bring about the restoration and

43. This coheres with making "righteousness and peace spring up before all nations" (Isa 61:11).

44. Perdue, *Reconstructing Old Testament Theology*, 188. Here, Perdue is explaining Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 121-27, esp. 127.

establishment of Yahweh's people in Zion. The author of Ps 8 desired to accept the role of Yahweh's new royal servant minister (אשרתנה) in order to help bring about this promised future. The first-person voice in Isa 62 (like Ps 8) petitions Yahweh unceasingly, eager to do its part among Yahweh's servants, having realized that the hope of an ideal Davidic king ushering in the just and peaceful reign of Yahweh has become the responsibility of all Yahweh's servants. Psalm 8 represents a similar kind of petition, using like-minded motifs as Isa 60-62. It is with this type of unbridled enthusiasm and desire to persevere in the service of revealing Yahweh's glory that Ps 8:2b proclaims "May I serve your heavenly power/victory!"

The proclamation of Ps 8 to serve Yahweh's heavenly power/victory represents the desire of anomic communities, facing hardship, to carry out their roles as Yahweh's servants. The first-person cohortative of שרת (אשרתנה) in Ps 8:2b, "may I serve," is a priestly addition (like Isa 61:6) to the reappropriation of the Davidic covenant/mandate. This connection to the Davidic covenant/mandate becomes clear in Ps 8:4-7, in which the psalmist expresses wonderment concerning the reality that Yahweh created the heavens (v. 4), appointed humans (v. 5), and exalted them as Yahweh's representatives (v. 6a) to a royal status, crowning them with glory and majesty (v. 6b) and making them to rule over the works of Yahweh's hands (v. 7). This is how Ps 8, like Isa 60-62, expresses the desire to serve Yahweh's power/victory (or glory/imperial reign in Isaiah) as his servants, through their service as priests and ministers.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have shown how the speaker in Ps 8 proclaims a desire to serve Yahweh's heavenly power/victory by appealing to humanity's status as God's images (Gen 1:27) and accepting the role of Yahweh's new servant (Isa 55:3), as a priest/minister of God (Isa 61:1-6; cf Isa 42:1). I have offered an interpretation of Ps 8 that resolves its translational difficulties. I have proposed a new way to understand the translation problem of אשר תנה (literally "which to put") in Ps 8:2b. My new translation of "may I serve your heavenly power/victory" lends support to the more satisfying interpretation of the peculiar reference to babies and infants in verse 3a, as a reference to the goodly gods in *CAT 1.23*. The proclamation of the psalmist to serve Yahweh's cosmic agenda in verse 2, followed by the reference to the goodly gods in verse 3 provides a convincing context for translating the varying verb forms in verses 6-7 (*waw*-consecutive-imperfect, imperfect [v. 6], and imperfect, perfect [v. 7]) as a verbal chiasm that represents humanity's developing role in ruling over the works of Yahweh's hands. This understanding helps illuminate the sequential intensification of the uncontrollability of animals in verses 8-9, with a reference to Leviathan in verse 9. These features of the psalm all point to a high view of humanity in which the actions of humans have cosmic implications.

In this thesis, I have provided an ideological context that supports the bold claim that the speaker in Ps 8 sought to serve Yahweh's heavenly power/victory by illustrating how ancient Near Eastern royal ideology considered the king the image and representative of the deity and how both Genesis and Ps 8 appear to be adapting this ideology by applying it to all of humanity in relationship to Yahweh. The Old Testament depiction of Israelite kings with the potential to function as representatives and mediators of Yahweh, similar to the image-of-god ideology in the ancient Near East, supports the claim that the author of Ps 8 was familiar with this ideology. The dependence of the king's ability to represent and mediate Yahweh upon the justice and righteousness of the king provides the historical/ideological background for understanding why the psalmist sought to put himself in a position to serve Yahweh in an upright manner. The failure of Yahweh's ideal king and the resulting transfer of the Davidic mandate to Israel as a whole, highlights the need for the psalmist to develop an understanding of his new role and succeed in it. This is why the author of Ps 8 adapted ancient Near Eastern image-of-god ideology in relationship to ideal Israelite royal ideology and sublimated these concepts to a priestly understanding of serving Yahweh as his recently anointed servant. In the cult, the speaker in Ps 8 and its recipients can focus on observing Yahweh's commandments, and "through myth and ritual . . . contribute to the maintenance of the cosmos and the expression of divine majesty and power."¹ The sublimation of Yahweh's servant to the priesthood explains how the psalmist could justify proclaiming "may I serve your heavenly power/victory."

1. Perdue, *Reconstructing Old Testament Theology: After the Collapse of History*, 223. Perdue is summarizing Fishbane, *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking*.

My interpretation of Ps 8 fits within the servant theology in Trito-Isaiah that extends and develops certain themes of Isa 40-55.² Comparisons between Ps 8 and Isa 60-62 further illustrate Ps 8's relationship to this Isaiah servant theology and Ps 8's desire to serve (שרת) Yahweh. Viewing Ps 8 alongside Isa 60-62 and its first-person proclamations (cf. Isa 42:1-3) illuminates a shared motif for understanding the statement "may I serve" in Ps 8:2b. The desire to serve (שרת or minister) becomes clear if understood in light of the promise in Isa 61:6, "but you shall be called priests of the Lord, you shall be named ministers of [משרתי] our God." In Ps 8:2b, the speaker and his community desire to serve Yahweh's heavenly power/victory in the sense that they seek to help bring about Yahweh's imperial reign and the restoration of Zion by living into the role of Yahweh's royal "Davidic" servants and ministers (משרתים). Living into the role of Yahweh's new servants means maintaining covenant with Yahweh, keeping his ordinances (such as the Sabbath), and fostering a community in which foreigners join themselves to the Lord, minister to him, love the name, of the Lord and become his servants (Isa 56:6-7). Psalm 8 connects these socio-ethical conditions of Yahweh's reign to Gen 1's mandate for humans to manage creation and Yahweh's/humanity's (mythological) task to keep the forces of chaos at bay. Psalm 8's message would have inspired Israel and the members of the community to live into their roles as Yahweh's servants/mediators during times of hardship such as this when the hope of an ideal king ushering in the just and peaceful reign of Yahweh was out of reach. The first-person cohortative of שרת (אשרתנה) in Ps 8:2b "may I serve," is a priestly addition (as in Isa

2. I am adapting this methodology from Lyons, "Psalm 22 and the 'Servants' of Isaiah 54; 56-66," 647.

61:6) to the reappropriation of the Davidic covenant after Isa 55 applied it to Israel as a whole. Psalm 8 participates in the general message of Isa 60-62 that the faithful persistence of the people will allow them to function as Yahweh's servants in the service of revealing Yahweh's glory and the fulfillment of Deutero-Isaiah's promises. Psalm 8 does this through a "mythological grid" in which the psalmist declares a desire to serve Yahweh's heavenly power/victory against cosmic foes and (as in Gen 1) participate in the ongoing management of the created order. By doing so, the psalmist promotes a remarkably high view of God-given agency to humankind, or at least to Yahweh's chosen people Israel. Together, these traditions would have reminded Israel of their true identity and proper beginning as Yahweh's people in order to orient them to their proper end as Yahweh's servants, a light to the nations (Isa 49:5-7; cf. Gen 12:1-3), a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation (e.g., Exod 19:6).

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