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### A Study of Psalms 16, 49, 116, and 23 and Their View of Eternal Life and the Resurrection

Joel Christiansen

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, ir\_christiansenj@csl.edu

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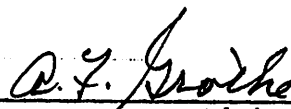
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A STUDY OF PSALMS 16, 49, 116, AND 23  
AND THEIR VIEW OF ETERNAL LIFE AND THE RESURRECTION

A Research Paper Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for elective  
E-200

by

Joel T. Christiansen  
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Adviser

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## INTRODUCTION

This study is an analysis of Psalms 16, 29, 116, and 23 for their understanding about eternal life and the resurrection of the body. Since the time of Mowinckel it has been the standard assumption of most scholars that neither Israel nor early Judaism knew of a faith in a resurrection. On the basis of Ugaritic parallels Mitchell Dahood in his work on the Psalms challenged that conception. Not only are there references to immortality and the resurrection in Psalms 49 and 73, which other scholars agree with, but it was his contention that there are at least forty other passages in the Psalms that speak of this. In Psalms he remarked,

The psalmists gave much more thought to the problem of death and the afterlife than earlier commentators could have suspected . . . perhaps the most significant contribution to biblical theology that flows from the translation based on the new philological principles concerns the subject of resurrection and immortality.<sup>1</sup>

This position attacked a stance that claimed the belief in the resurrection did not appear until the Hellenistic period.<sup>2</sup> Instead of the resurrection and immortality the Israelites were concerned with the continuation of the life of the nation

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<sup>1</sup>Mitchell Dahood, Psalms, 3 vols. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1966-70), 1:xxxvi.

<sup>2</sup>T. H. Gaster, "Resurrection," in The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, vol. 4, ed. George A. Buttrick, et al., (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 39.

(Is. 56:3,5) and the family (Ps. 37:25,26).<sup>3</sup> As J. H. Eaton observed, "For most of their course, the Old Testament people had to suffer and trust without a hope of future life for themselves, apart from a continuation in their descendants."<sup>4</sup> Living in communion with God and His law was the fulfillment of life for the faithful. The Book of Daniel, which was written during the Hellenistic era, is the first witness to a belief in a resurrection. Those who hold an earlier date for the writing of Daniel use it as evidence of an earlier belief in the resurrection.

In the length of this study it would be impossible to review each psalm for its belief in the eternal life and the resurrection. We will analyze four psalms on the basis of their context to determine their understanding. However, prior to this we will set the stage by summarizing the beliefs of the Babylonians and Egyptians. This is important since the Old Testament should be seen in relation to the faith of its neighbors.

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<sup>3</sup>O. A. Piper, "Life," in The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, vol. 3, ed. George A. Buttrick, et al., (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 126.

<sup>4</sup>J. H. Eaton, Psalms: Introduction and Commentary. (London: SCM Press, 1967), p. 40.

## CHAPTER I

### NEAR EASTERN CONCEPTS OF DEATH AND THE AFTERLIFE

#### The Egyptian Beliefs

Our primary source for Egyptian beliefs of death and the afterlife is the Book of the Dead. This book is a collection of religious texts that illustrate not only the refined beliefs of an established priesthood but also the various superstitions and reverence for amulets, magical rites, and charms which were considered essentials for salvation.<sup>5</sup> The three major recensions of the Book of the Dead are the Heliopolitan Recension, which was found on the walls of the tombs of the kings of the V and VI dynasties, the Theban Recension, which was written upon papyri and coffins primarily during the XVIII to XXII Dynasties, and the Saite Recension, which was in use from the XXVI Dynasty to the end of the Ptolemaic Period.<sup>6</sup> Caution must be exercised in making generalizations from these documents since there is no complete organized and orderly system of belief. Despite this obstacle there can be no doubt that the Egyptians were more preoccupied with what the gods would do to them in the next life than the action of the gods during the present life. Their religious

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<sup>5</sup> E. A. Budge, Egyptian Ideas of the Future Life. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd, 1980), p. xi.

<sup>6</sup> E. A. Budge, The Book of the Dead: The Papyrus of Ani. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1913), p. 3.

thought was dominated by the prospect of life beyond the grave.

Throughout history there have been different designations used for the entire person. Some adopted the view that a person was composed of the two elements of body and soul while there has also been the view of the trichotomy of body, soul, and spirit. However, these are not the only two theories. The Egyptians saw a vast number of constituent elements which composed a man. These elements are important to the discussion of Egyptian beliefs in the afterlife since each part had a different role after death.

While it is possible to include other elements, we will look at the khat, ka, ba, khaibet, khu, sekhem, ren, and sahu. Together these eight composed the physical, mental, and spiritual make up. The physical body was called the khat. The khat was subject to decay except when it was preserved by mummification. Even though it neither left the tomb nor reappeared on earth after death, its preservation was essential since from it the sahu would appear. The sahu was the dwelling place of the soul. An indication of this is the statement in Chapter 89, "Gods who make souls to enter into their sahu."<sup>7</sup> From the physical body it came to life or germinated. There are many passages which attest to this. "I have germinated like the things which germinate (i.e., plants),"<sup>8</sup> and "I shall live, I shall live, I shall germinate, I shall germinate, I shall germinate . . ."<sup>9</sup> This spiritual body was lasting

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<sup>7</sup>The Book of the Dead, trans. E. A. Budge (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd, 1938), p. 280.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 268.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 520.

and incorruptible. The ka, or image, was the part of the heart which contained the seat of the power of life and the source of good and evil thoughts.<sup>10</sup> It had an independent existence and could wander away from its dwelling place in the tomb. Since the ka could eat food the greatest care was taken to lay food offerings in the tomb for it. If this offering was not given the ka would be forced to leave the tomb and eat refuse and drink filthy water. Closely connected with the ka was the ba, the heart-soul. It was one of the principles of life. The Egyptians depicted the ba in the form of a human-headed hawk which would revisit the body in the tomb, converse with it, and bring food to it. It was eternal and could assume material or immaterial form at will.<sup>11</sup> As the ka and ba could move at will so could the khaibet, or shadow. It too was nourished by offerings deposited in the tomb. Another important and eternal part of man was the khu, or spirit-soul. The khu lived in the sahu. In addition to its meaning as spirit-soul it has also been called "the shining one," "the glorious one," and "intelligence." It is frequently mentioned in connection with the ba. The vital power of man was the sekhem. This was the incorporeal part of man which dwelled in heaven among the khu.<sup>12</sup> Finally, the ren, or name of man also existed after death. Without the ren, man ceased to exist. Consequently, the Egyptians took extraordinary precautions to preserve it by

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<sup>10</sup>Budge, The Book of the Dead: The Papyrus of Ani, p. 73.

<sup>11</sup>The Book of the Dead, p. lx.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. lxii.



accompanying offerings with the mention of the name of the dead.

The belief in an afterlife was closely connected with the belief in Osiris, the god of judgment, resurrection, immortality, and the Elysian Fields. Even from the ancient texts of the Heliopolitan Recension Osiris was recognized as the chief of the gods of the dead.<sup>13</sup> It was believed that Osiris was of divine origin but that he lived upon earth in a material body. After being viciously murdered and cut in pieces, his sister Isis collected the limbs of his body and by means of magical words he came back to life. With this new life he became immortal, entered the underworld, and became the king and judge of the dead. In Chapter 44 of the Book of the Dead the immortality of Osiris is emphasized, "Homage to thee, O my divine father Osiris, thou hast being with thy members. Thou didst not decay, thou didst not become worms, thou didst not diminish, thou didst not become corruption, thou didst not putrefy . . ."<sup>14</sup> Since Osiris had conquered death and was living in a body with all its parts, kings and other followers believed that they too would enjoy everlasting life and eternal happiness in a perfectly constituted body. An example of this afterlife which Osiris had won for the people is observed in a hymn and litany to Osiris in Chapter 15. "The dead rise up to see thee, they breath the air and they look upon thy face when the Disk riseth on its horizon; their hearts are at peace inasmuch as they behold thee, O thou who art Eternity

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. liv.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 520.

and Everlastingness."<sup>15</sup>

From Chapter 125 it is evident that man's conduct during his life on earth affected his life after death. This chapter portrays the scene of judgment in the Hall of the Double Maati. Following the deceased's initial hymn of praise to Osiris, a Negative Confession was made. This consisted of a statement of innocence in regard to evil doing to each of the forty-two gods who served as judges. If the proceedings went against the dead, a monster was close at hand ready to devour his victim. Included in this confession were the statements, "I have not done violence . . . I have not committed theft . . . I have not slain man or woman . . . I have not uttered falsehood . . . I have not defiled the wife of a man . . . I have not stirred up strife . . ." <sup>16</sup>

Survivors of the dead used magic to effect the results. It was believed that good words said over the dead together with the words written down and buried with him in the tomb would procure good results in the future. In the Book of the Dead there are many rubrics for the survivors to follow to help the dead. Chapter 6 details the custom of burying a figure, called a ushabtiu, in order for it to perform the work that the dead was assigned in the future life. Another example is Chapter 130 which provides the rubric that if this chapter was recited over a picture of the god Ra it would ensure life forever for the soul of the dead.

The Egyptian looked forward to a life of eternal happiness

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 67.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 366-71.

after death in the Fields of Aaru or Sekhetepet. Today these fields are commonly called the Elysian Fields. In Chapter 110 we are provided with a vignette detailing this place. In the Field of Reeds, which is where the dismembered Osiris was remade and brought to life, a large farm intersected by canals is pictured. But this is only one part of the entire Elysian Fields. These fields show an agricultural society where the deceased harvest wheat, drive oxen, and plough the land. From this we can conclude that the Egyptians saw their future existence in a place resembling their life upon earth. Indeed, these Elysian Fields resemble their earthly life in the flat fertile lands intersected by streams of running water of the Nile Delta.<sup>17</sup>

#### The Babylonian Beliefs

We have observed the prominent role that the afterlife played in Egyptian life. Although the Babylonians also had a view of life beyond the grave it was of diminished importance for the everyday life.<sup>18</sup> Instead the actions of the gods in the present life and their rewards and punishments were emphasized. Alfred Jeremias supported this with his words, "The gods of the Babylonian and Assyrian peoples are gods of the living, who punish the doers of evil and reward the doers of good in their lifetime."<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. lxxiii.

<sup>18</sup> Edmund F. Sutcliffe, The Old Testament and the Future Life. (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1946), p. 8.

<sup>19</sup> Alfred Jeremias, Die babylonisch-assyrischen Vorstellungen vom Leben nach dem Tode, in Edmund F. Sutcliffe, The Old Testament and the Future Life, p. 8.

The Babylonians pictured the earth as a mountain range rising from its lowest point at the periphery of the earth to its greatest height at the center. It was within the mountain that the abode of the dead existed. Among the many titles ascribed to this place were kigal, the great place below; kur, the lower world; urugal, the great city; and irsit la tari, the land of no return.<sup>20</sup> It was located not far from the surface of the earth since in the Gilgamesh Epic Gilgamesh vainly tried to recover his pukku and mikku from it with his hand and then his foot.<sup>21</sup>

No one could escape the threat of death. Even the gods could die through violence. As evidence of this, Apsu and Mummu were killed by Ea and Ti'amat died in combat at the hand of Marduk. Even though death was inevitable people used sacrifices, temple building, image making, and other deeds of piety to postpone it. This is supported by the saying, "The fear (of the gods) begets favor; sacrifice increases life . . . He who fears the Anunnaki lengthens (his days)." <sup>22</sup>

The Babylonians considered it necessary to bury the dead in order to provide any opportunity for admission to the underworld.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, food was also offered the deceased in order to free him from the curse of eating leftovers thrown into the streets.<sup>24</sup> These food offerings did not cease at the entombment

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<sup>20</sup> Alexander Heidel, The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), p. 171.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 170.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 140.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

but were offered regularly. An example of a monthly offering is this command by King Ammiditana of the First Babylonian Dynasty, "Milk and butter are needed for the mortuary offering of the month of Ab. As soon as thou seest this my tablet, let a man of thy command take thirty cows and one (pi) of butter and let him come to Babylon . . . Let him not delay, let him come quickly!"<sup>25</sup>.

While sacrifices and other attempts were made to induce the gods to be favorable to the dead and grant him favors, a man's status in the realm of the dead was based on his position during his life on earth. This expression of continuity between the past and the future is indicated by the treatment of royalty. Since the king would need the service of people after death as he did before, a royal funeral was also accompanied by the internment of the king's bodyguards, servants, wives, and even draft animals harnessed to the chariot.<sup>26</sup> In order to maintain the distinction between the royalty and the common man royal tombs were made in a different design and royalty were buried with a different rite.

After death the deceased was transported from the grave, across the river Huber to the city of the nether world. This great city, urugal, was surrounded by seven walls with each wall containing a gate and a demon stood guarding it. It was at the city that the only judgment occurred.<sup>27</sup> Tablet XII of the

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 152.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 158.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 191.

Gilgamesh Epic outlines some of the basis for this judgment. If a man had committed a crime his future was bleak and he was sent to one of the lowest positions in the underworld. However, if the deceased was killed in battle he would have the continual comfort of his head being supported by his mother and father. Higher degrees of pleasure were also awarded for the greater number of sons produced.<sup>28</sup>

Alexander Heidel maintained that it was theoretically possible in Babylonian thought for a resurrection from the dead since Ishtar had threatened to make the dead rise and eat as the living in order that there would be more dead on earth than in it.<sup>29</sup> However, while this may have been possible there was no indication of any instance of a resurrection. Some scholars have contended that the titles "the one who makes the dead to live" and "the one who restores the dead to life" given to Marduk, Nabu, Shamesh, and Gila, the goddess of healing support a resurrection of the dead. We must guard against taking these titles too literally for they are used in regards to sickness not death. These titles are frequently used in hymns calling for delivery from disease not death.<sup>30</sup> For the Babylonian restoration from near death was a resurrection to life.

In both Babylon and Egypt we have observed a belief in a life that existed beyond death. This life was afforded to all men but in different degrees depending upon one's previous life

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., pp. 99-100.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 208.

<sup>30</sup>Sutcliffe, p. 16.

and the influence from his descendants on earth. We will now turn our attention to the Old Testament understanding of Sheol to see how it compares to these two systems of belief.

### Sheol in the Old Testament

At the start of this discussion we must admit some ambiguity over the etymology of Sheol. It is the position of most scholars today that it is derived from  $\text{שׁוֹאֵל}$  with the root meaning to ask or inquire.<sup>31</sup> It is suggested that Sheol was first known as the realm of the dead and the source of religious oracle. In fact the word  $\text{שׁוֹאֵל}$  is used in connection with the forbidden practices of necromancy in Dt. 18:11 and I Chr. 13:13. The other opinion is represented by Gruber who based Sheol on the root  $\text{שׁוֹאֵל}$ . With this etymology Sheol would originally have meant a cavity or hollow. Consequently, it came to be associated with the subterranean world.<sup>32</sup> Either way, the etymology remains uncertain and its meaning is gleaned from its usage not its original root.

Despite the fact that Sheol does not occur in Ugaritic, Phoenician and Punic, recent insight from the Ugaritic has helped identify some of the other synonyms for Sheol. While Heidel has identified four of these synonyms as Abaddon ( $\text{אַבְדֹּן}$ ), Pit

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<sup>31</sup>T. H. Gaster, "Abode of the Dead," in The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, vol. 1, ed. George A. Buttrick, et al., (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 787.

<sup>32</sup>L. Gruber, What After Death. (Burlington, Iowa: Lutheran Literary Board, 1925), pp. 18-9.

( שְׁחַל ), Well ( בְּרֵי ), and Death ( מוֹת ),<sup>33</sup> Nicholas Tromp has proposed many more. A few of his are Hidden Place ( מְסֻמָּה , Job 40:13), Secret Place ( מְסֻמָּה , Ps. 139:15), Nether World ( יָרֵד , Ex. 15:12), Dust ( עֲפָרָה , Job 1:21), and Darkness ( חֹשֶׁךְ ), Ps. 94:17).<sup>34</sup>

There are three major uses of Sheol in the Old Testament. The first of these is of the grave, place of the dead, or death. This usage is apparent in Ez. 32:26,27, Prov. 23:14, I Kings 2:6, Is. 38:10, Job 7:9, 17:13, Ps. 88:49, 141:7, and Gen. 37:35. A few examples from these passages will support this meaning. In Ez. 32:26,27 there is evidence that in the burial of the circumcised warriors the weapons of war were placed in the grave.

Meshech and Tubal are there, and all their multitude, their graves round about them, all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword; for they spread terror in the land of the living. And they do not lie with the fallen mighty men of old who went down to Sheol with their weapons of war, whose swords were laid under their heads, and whose shields are upon their bones; for the terror of the mighty men was in the land of the living.

In Ps. 141:7 the reference is also to the grave. "As a rock which one cleaves and shatters on the land, so shall their bones be strewn at the mouth of Sheol." The meaning of this verse is that as the land is plowed so the graves have been plowed. As a result the bones have been scattered outside of the mouth of the grave, there to lie in disgrace.<sup>35</sup> Prov. 23:13;14 is an example of Sheol used as a term for death. "Do not withhold

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<sup>33</sup>Heidel, p. 177.

<sup>34</sup>Nicholas J. Tromp, Primitive Conceptions of Death and the Nether World in the Old Testament. (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969), pp. 46, 47, 23, 85, 76.

<sup>35</sup>Heidel, p. 175.



discipline from a child; if you beat him with a rod, he will not die, if you beat him with the rod, you will save his life from Sheol." "Saving his life from Sheol" is paralleled with "he will not die." Disciplining a child will not cause him to die but to live. This is a reference to the premature death suffered by the wicked. The Septuagint here and in other places translates Sheol as *Θάνατος*, or death. In I Kings 2:5-7 David demanded that Solomon not allow Joab's "grey head to go down to Sheol in peace" meaning that he should not allow Joab a long life and the pride of dying a natural death. From this meaning we are provided with information about the realm of the dead. No matter what one's status is, whether righteous or wicked, all must die (Ps. 87:49, Gen. 37:35, I Kings 2:6-9, Is. 38:10). Once one dies there is no possibility of a return to life on earth (Job 7:9-10). There is no longer an opportunity for forgiveness or mercy (Is. 38:18, Ps. 6:6, 88:6).<sup>36</sup>

The second usage of Sheol is that of a place for the wicked or the underworld. Here only the wicked are spoken of as going to Sheol and this is a consequence of their evil lives. "And as regards Sheol, we have evidence that it, in the signification of the subterranean realm of the spirits, applies to the habitation of the souls of the wicked only."<sup>37</sup> Examples of this meaning are Is. 5:14, 14:9-15, Ps. 139:8, Job 22:13, 24:19, Num. 16:30, and Ps. 9:18. In the Numbers passage the fate of Korah,

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<sup>36</sup>Louis A. Brighton, "Hades the New Testament Equivalent of Sheol" (Bachelor's Thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1952), p. 46.

<sup>37</sup>Heidel, p. 184.

Dathan, and Abiram was to be swallowed alive by the earth and dwell below with the spirits. Isaiah 14 gives us a more detailed description of Sheol as the underworld.

Sheol beneath is stirred up to meet you when you come, it rouses the Rephaim to greet you, all who were leaders of the earth; it raises from their thrones all who were kings of the nations. All of them will speak and say to you: "You too have become as weak as we! You have become like us!" Your pomp is brought down to Sheol, the sound of your harps; maggots are the bed beneath you, and worms are your covering.

Here the inhabitants of Sheol ( אֲנִי שְׁאוֹל ) mockingly welcomed the new inhabitant, the king of Babylon.

In this use of Sheol the inhabitants remain alive and move (Is. 14:9) in contrast to the lack of life in the abode of the dead (Eccl. 9:10). This realm of the wicked may even have different regions and degrees. It is the place of punishment for the wicked and remains under the control of God (Amos 9:2, Ps. 139:8). While the inhabitants in Sheol suffer from a broken relationship with God and a loss of trust and hope in Him,<sup>38</sup> Sheol is still within the realm of God's jurisdiction.<sup>39</sup> R. H. Charles argued that Sheol is out of God's control and man must be resurrected to earth before God will rule over him again.<sup>40</sup> This lacks Scriptural support since it is evident from Psalm 139 that God's power is not only on earth but extends into the depths below.

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<sup>38</sup>W. O. E. Oesterley and Theodore H. Robinson, Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development, 2nd ed. (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1937), p. 360.

<sup>39</sup>Andrew Key, "The Concept of Death in Early Israelite Religion," The Journal of Bible and Religion 32, p. 243.

<sup>40</sup>R. H. Charles, A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life. (London: A. & C. Black, 1899), p. 138.

Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?  
Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?  
If I ascend to heaven, thou art there!  
If I make my bed in Sheol, thou art there!

It is difficult to separate these two meanings of Sheol, but if this is not done needless confusion arises. There would then seem to be two opposing views of Sheol in the Old Testament since some passages (I Kings 2:6-9, Is. 38:10) speak of everyone going to Sheol while others speak of only the wicked dwelling in Sheol (Prov. 15:24, 23:14). We must realize that in the former case it is understanding Sheol as death and all men suffer death, while in the latter case the mention is of the abode of the wicked and not the righteous.

The third usage of Sheol frequently receives insufficient attention. In this meaning Sheol is used figuratively to express sickness and calamity (Ps. 30:4, 86:13, Jonah 2:3). It is due to this usage that we must tread lightly in making conclusions about what the specific psalms are referring to. In Psalm 86:13 there is a plea to Yahweh for rescue from the ruthless men who seek to kill the psalmist. "For great is thy steadfast love toward me; thou hast delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol. It is his prayer that Yahweh will save him from the depths of Sheol. With the assistance of verse two, "Preserve my life, for I am godly, save thy servant who trusts in thee," it is obvious this is not a mention of Sheol as the grave of the place of the wicked but of physical life.

From this description of Sheol we can make a few comparisons to Babylonian and Egyptian beliefs. While the Egyptian afterlife was mainly under the control of Osiris, it too like

Babylon had other gods who ruled over it. In the Old Testament Sheol was under the jurisdiction of Yahweh alone. In Egypt and Babylon all men were consigned to life in the underworld after death. This is not the situation in the Old Testament. While all men die, only the wicked suffered in the underworld. While the living could still affect the afterlife of the deceased in Babylon and Egypt by sacrifices and mystical rites, there is no indication of this in the Old Testament.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Heidel, pp. 222-3.

## CHAPTER II

### PSALM 16

Preserve me, God, for in You I take refuge.  
I said to Yahweh, "You are my Lord;  
My happiness depends wholly on You."  
Yahweh deals gloriously with the saints in the land,  
All my delight is in them.  
Those who choose another god multiply their sorrows;  
Their libations of blood I will not pour out  
Nor take their names upon my lips.  
Yahweh is my portion and my cup;  
You support my lot.  
The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;  
Yea, I have a goodly heritage.  
I will bless Yahweh who has given me counsel;  
In the night also my heart instructs me.  
I have kept Yahweh always before me;  
Since He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.  
Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices;  
My body also will dwell securely.  
For You will not give me up to Sheol,  
Nor let Your godly one see the Pit.  
You show me the path of life;  
In Your presence there is fullness of joy,  
In Your right hand are pleasures forever.

In contrast to the standard opinion that this psalm is a rescue from sickness and affliction,<sup>42</sup> Dahood has led the crusade in viewing it as an example of a belief in the resurrection. Crucial to this controversy are the final three verses and the understanding of the two key words  $\text{וְיִשְׁׁמְרֵנִי}$  and  $\text{אֲנִי בְּיָמַי}$ . We will endeavor to understand these words on the basis of the context and their usage in the Old Testament.

There are three basic opinions as to the setting of this psalm. Charles Briggs linked the setting to the post-exilic

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<sup>42</sup>Piper, p. 126

community. As support for this he appealed to the expression, "the saints who are in the land" (v.4). For him this implied that there were also some of the faithful who were still in Babylon or returning to Jerusalem.<sup>43</sup> In addition, the similarities with II Isaiah regarding sacrifices to the gods and the distribution of lots support this argument.<sup>44</sup> The second major contention is that of Weiser who placed it in the pre-exilic cult of the Covenant Festival. The psalmist in affirming what the encounter with God means to his faith spoke of the presence of God (v.1,8,11), the glorification of God by His dealings with the community of His saints (v.3), the renunciation of foreign gods (v.4), the bestowal of land (v.5), and the assurance of salvation (v.8-11). These characteristics provide allusions to the Covenant Festival.<sup>45</sup> Von Rad also found a cultic setting but his reasoning was different. Part of the basis for his decision was the expression, "Yahweh is my portion (יְהוָה לִי חֵלֶק)," which could have been a reference to the Levites who were the only tribe not allotted land.<sup>46</sup> Instead of land their portion was Yahweh (Num. 18:20, Dt. 10:9, 18:1). Dt. 10:9 says, "Therefore Levi has no portion or inheritance with his brothers; Yahweh is his inheritance." The word for inheritance is יְשִׁרָהּ which is the

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<sup>43</sup> Charles A. Briggs and Emilie G. Briggs, Psalms, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1906), 1:118.

<sup>44</sup> Leopold Sabourin, The Psalms: Their Origin and Meaning. (New York: Alba House, 1974), p. 269.

<sup>45</sup> Artur Weiser, The Psalms, trans. Herbert Hartwell. London: SCM Press Ltd., 1962), pp. 172-3.

<sup>46</sup> Gerhard von Rad, Old Testament Theology, 2 vols, trans. D. M. G. Stalker. (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1962), 1:404.

same word as in verse six. Von Rad claimed the history of this phrase continued and it became spiritualized and referred to the refuge that can be sought in the communion with God.<sup>47</sup> The final opinion to the setting is the unique one offered by Dahood. He described this psalm as a profession of faith by a Canaanite convert to Yahwism. The title, "El" which is the Canaanite name for the chief deity, the denouncing of foreign gods (v.4), and the belief in immortality (v.10-11) which was common among the Canaanites serve as the basis for this claim.<sup>48</sup> Due to the strong statement of belief in Yahweh, the mention of Yahweh as the portion, and the renouncing of gods, it is our conclusion that this psalm originated in the cultic setting. The matter of exilic, pre-exilic, or post-exilic cannot be determined.

With this setting we then have a glimmer of the theme of this psalm. It will be discovered more fully as we discuss the psalm in detail. The psalm opens with a petition for protection. While Delitzsch understood this as a rescue from death<sup>49</sup> this is not necessarily implied. What the psalmist is praying in these two verses is that he may become entirely dependent on Yahweh for his prosperity. Without Yahweh's divine favor and care there is no happiness. It is easier to view verse three from the perspective of the Septuagint and Vulgate.<sup>50</sup> It is Yahweh who takes

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 1:403.

<sup>48</sup> Dahood, 1:90.

<sup>49</sup> Franz Delitzsch, A Commentary on the Book of Psalms, trans. David Eaton and James Duguid. (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1883), p. 272.

<sup>50</sup> Briggs and Briggs, 1:119.

good pleasure in these saints. Here is another sign of His constant faithfulness to His people. An aspect connected to God's care and faithfulness is His claim that the people remain set apart for Him. Since all goodness flows from man's exclusive relationship to God, all relations with other gods must be discarded if man is to remain happy. The libations of blood were used by those outside of this exclusive relationship to gain a reconciling and redeeming power from the gods. The invocation of other gods in worship also set one outside of the conduct demanded by God.

As we mentioned before, verses five and six are a spiritualization of the phrase, "Yahweh is my portion." For the psalmist communion with Yahweh is an unassailable fortress from the threats outside. This connection with God can never be destroyed. Indeed, the psalmist cannot see a future without God in his life. Yahweh is his inheritance! In verses eight and nine the poet praises Yahweh since He has counseled him in his life and conduct. In the darkness of night Yahweh speaks to him through his heart. God's continual presence is the source of his confidence. The psalmist's life becomes a nonstop conversation with God. No matter what occurs in his life God is there with counsel and refuge.

The final three verses are a continuation of this sense of unending communion with God. As a result of being assured of God's constant presence the psalmist rejoices with joy in verse nine. We must be careful not to make an arbitrary separation of body and soul. The psalmist is not thinking of soul in



contrast to the body, but as the life principle of both body and soul.<sup>51</sup> In verse ten many exegetes refuse to see an expression of physical death but regard Sheol as a metaphor for affliction and deliverance from present ills.<sup>52</sup> This would be similar to the way the Babylonian titles "the one who makes the dead to live" and "the one who restores the dead to life" are used. However, to remain consistent with the context it appears the poet has extended his view of communion with God. No longer is this communion restricted to the present life, but in some manner God will remain present beyond death. Death has ceased to be a final separation from God.<sup>53</sup> The main stress of this tenth verse is not the manner of how this communion will be kept after death, but the affirmation that there will be such a communion. The final verse is a culmination of the whole psalm. The affirmation of faith expressed in Yahweh as the only giver of goodness (v.1-2), the affirmation of hope in the constant presence of God in his life (v.8), and the affirmation of that same hope beyond death (v.10) is summarized here. God's constant presence and His communion that is offered man is the only source of joy.

We will now answer some of the contentions of Dahood and others who see in this psalm a belief in eternal life and the resurrection of the body. Dahood claimed that  $\square^h \square \square \square$

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<sup>51</sup>N. W. Porteous, "Soul," in The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, vol. 4, ed. George A. Buttrick, et al., (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 428.

<sup>52</sup>Piper, p. 127.

<sup>53</sup>Weiser, p. 178

should be translated the "path of life eternal." The Ugaritic of 2 Aqht VI:27-29 is cited as evidence. This passage balances hyym with blmt (immortality).<sup>54</sup> On the basis of a word study we will arrive at a different conclusion.

The idiom  $\square^h \square \square \square \text{X}$  is used in five different places in the Old Testament. Besides the reference in verse eleven it is also in Prov. 2:19, 5:6, 10:17, and 15:24. Our attention will first focus on Prov. 2:16-21.

You will be saved from the loose woman,  
From the adventuress with her smooth words,  
Who forsakes the companion of her youth  
And forgets the covenant of her God;  
For her house sinks down to death,  
And her paths to the Rephaim;  
None who go to her come back  
Nor do they regain the paths of life.

This saying concerns an adulteress, the consequence of her sin, and the warning to her partners. Because of her adultery, which is a transgression of God's covenant, her penalty will be a premature death,<sup>55</sup> and a life with the Rephaim, the inhabitants of the place of the wicked. Not only will she suffer this penalty but her partners will not be able to return to the "paths of life." This "path of life" is not an antithesis of the place of the Rephaim since through the aid of versus thirteen and fifteen  $\square \square \text{X}$  is defined as the way of uprightness or crookedness in this life. In addition, verses twenty and twenty-one speak of the way ( $\square \square$ ) of good men who follow the path of righteousness

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<sup>54</sup>Dahood, 1:93.

<sup>55</sup>Crawford H. Toy, The Book of Proverbs. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916), p. 49.

( ִׁדְקָרָא ִׁדְקָרָא ) by walking in the covenant of God. Her partners will no longer walk in the "paths of life" since they have broken the covenant with God and walk not in the way of the right but in the way of the wicked. Since the context of this proverb is about the earthly life of integrity, righteousness, and justice the "paths of life" refers to earthly living not eternal life.

Prov. 5:6 presents a similar description of an adulteress and the consequence of her sin.

For the lips of a loose woman drip honey,  
And her speech is smoother than oil;  
But in the end she is bitter as wormwood,  
Sharp as a two-edged sword.  
Her feet go down to death;  
Her steps follow the path to Sheol;  
She does not take heed to the path of life;  
Her ways wander, and she does not know it.

Here again the woman's manner of life is fatal to her earthly well being.<sup>56</sup> Her death is a result of not following the "path of life." Instead of following a level path she has wandered off the path. She does not heed the warning of 4:26 to keep from swerving to the right or left. The rest of the proverb is concerned with instructing the young men how to remain faithful to their wives and not fall into adultery. Once again the "path of life" refers to a pattern of earthly living and not an endless life after death. To stay on the right path one should avoid this tempting adulteress.

Prov. 10:17 presents a saying about the importance of following instruction. Literally the first clause is read, "the path to life is the one observing instruction." The sense of

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 104.

this passage is that the one who follows instruction will live a happier earthly life. It is the same idea as expressed in verse sixteen, "The wage of the righteous leads to life, the gain of the wicked to sin." Avoidance and rejection of instruction will not only lead to sin but also to premature death. "The fear of the Lord prolongs life, but the years of the wicked will be short" (v.27). Consequently, the emphasis of the "path of life" is a prolonged earthly life which is gained through a manner of behavior. It definitely is not a mention of eternal life.

The final passage and the most difficult one to precisely explain is Prov. 15:24, "The path of life upward is to the wise, as he avoids Sheol beneath." At an initial glance there appears to be a reference to the avoidance of Sheol, the place of the dead, by an upward flight to life. However, a key to understanding this are the words upward (אֲלֶיךָ אֲשׁרֶיךָ) and downwards (אֶל שְׁאוֹל). The term אֶל שְׁאוֹל is warranted since it was commonly understood that Sheol existed beneath the surface of the earth. Upward is used here as the negation of downward and not an indication of a heaven or a place above the earth. It conveys the meaning that the wise man climbs the way of life.<sup>57</sup>

Another misunderstanding is that of the meaning of Sheol. Sheol is not used here as a place of the dead, but the home of the wicked. No man can avoid the place of the dead. Verses nine through eleven are evidence that Sheol is used as a place for the wicked after death.

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 314.

The way of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord  
 But He loves him who pursues righteousness.  
 There is severe discipline for him who forsakes the way;  
 He who hates reproof will die.  
 Sheol and Abaddon lie open before the Lord,  
 How much more the hearts of men!

The wise man avoids the way to Sheol which is the punishment for those who forsake the way (  $\text{נִלְכָּד}$  ), by walking in the right path, the "path of life."<sup>58</sup>

In the four passages we have analyzed,  $\text{דַּלֵּי נַחַל חַיִּים}$  is used as physical life or a way of behavior to prolong that life and avoid the realm of the wicked. It is in contrast to the path of the wicked who suffer punishment as a consequence of their actions. Now we must relate this insight to Psalm 16. Due to the constant counsel of God, the psalmist is led to the "path of life." By staying in communion with God and following His direction the author is led through his earthly life. There is joy since with God's help and presence the poet will unswervingly remain on the path chosen by God and receive the pleasures that accompany that faithful response. We may conclude that  $\text{דַּלֵּי נַחַל חַיִּים}$  is used as a pattern of behavior in this verse and that the proposal of Dahood that it is a reference to eternal life is inappropriate with the usage of this idiom.

Another key word which is crucial to the understanding of this psalm is  $\text{סַנְוִי}$ . The controversy surrounding this word centers around its root and the resulting meaning from the root.

$\text{סַנְוִי}$  is used frequently in the Old Testament in two major ways. The first usage is of a pit or trap. This pit can either be an

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

animal trap or lion pit as in Prov. 26:27 or a region for the dead which is synonymous with Sheol. We noticed in our discussion of Sheol that Heidel designated that as one of the parallel terms for Sheol. This meaning would correspond with the root  $\text{נָאָשׁ}$ . The major alternative comes from the root  $\text{שָׁחַח}$ . This is a very common word which occurs over 150 times in the Old Testament. In the niphal among its meanings are to be corrupt through decay (Jer. 13:7) or to be depraved (Gen. 6:4). In the hiphil form it is used in the sense to destroy (Gen. 18:28) and to do what is evil (Ps. 14:1). The hophal carries with it the sense of destruction (Ez. 9:1) or what is disfigured (Is. 52:14).

Among those who favor the meaning pit for  $\text{שָׁחַח}$  in verse ten are Francis Brown, Charles Briggs, and T. H. Gaster. In A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament Brown placed its usage in Psalm 16 under the root  $\text{נָאָשׁ}$  and defined it as the pit of Sheol.<sup>59</sup> Gaster was in harmony with this interpretation but used the synonym ditch instead of pit.<sup>60</sup> While Briggs agreed with the determination of the root, he described the pit as a deeper place than Sheol and a dungeon for the wicked.<sup>61</sup>

The major opposition to this view are the ancient testimonies of the Septuagint, New Testament, and the Vulgate. The

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<sup>59</sup>Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), p. 1001.

<sup>60</sup>Gaster, "Abode of the Dead," p. 787.

<sup>61</sup>Briggs and Briggs, 1:122.

Septuagint's translation εἰς φρέαρ διαφθορᾶς is valuable since it did not approach the passage with a Christian bias to find a support for the resurrection of the dead. The Vulgate reproduced this translation in its in puteum interitus. The apostle Paul quoted this verse from the Septuagint in his sermon at the synagogue of Antioch of Pisidia as proof of Jesus' bodily resurrection. "This He has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus . . . Therefore he says also in another psalm, 'Thou wilt not let thy Holy One see corruption'" (Acts 13:33-35).

An analysis of the Septuagint's translation of שַׁחַוֹּ in the passages designated by Brown as referring to the pit of Sheol will clarify this situation. Brown listed fifteen passages<sup>62</sup> as evidence of שַׁחַוֹּ used as the pit. In five other passages besides Psalm 16 the Septuagint translates שַׁחַוֹּ as διαφθορά or φθορά'. These passages are

What profit is there in my death, if I go down to the שַׁחַוֹּ? Will the dust praise thee? Will it tell of thy faithfulness? (Ps. 30:9)

But thou, O God, wilt cast them down into the lowest שַׁחַוֹּ; men of blood and treachery shall not live out half their days. But I will trust in thee. (Ps. 55:24)

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the שַׁחַוֹּ. (Ps. 103:4)

He has redeemed my soul from going down into the שַׁחַוֹּ, and my life shall see the light. (Job 33:28)

I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me forever; yet thou didst bring up my life from the שַׁחַוֹּ, O Lord my God. (Jonah 2:7)

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<sup>62</sup> Job 17:14, 30:10, 33:18,22,24,28,30, Ps. 16:10, 49:9, 55:24, 103:4, Is. 38:17, 51:14, Ez. 28:8, and Jonah 2:7.

While it is possible that שָׁחַשׁ could refer to corruption of the body in Ps. 103:4 and even Job 33:28, it definitely refers to a pit of death in the other three. The greatest example is the psalm in Jonah which describes the distress of existence in the fish's belly. He compares that to Sheol which is alluded to in "the land whose bars closed upon me forever." שָׁחַשׁ is used as a parallel to the land with bars and therefore describes not a condition of spoil or rot but a place. In Psalm 30 not only does the positioning of שָׁחַשׁ as a parallel to שָׁחַשׁ point to its meaning as a place for the dead, but the description of שָׁחַשׁ as קֶבֶר, which is a reference to the earth of the grave, confirms this (Job 7:21, 20:11, 21:26, Ps. 22:15,29). Psalm 55 uses שָׁחַשׁ as a place for the wicked who will suffer premature death as a result of their evil ways. From these examples it has been seen that the Septuagint uses φθορά and διαφθορά for שָׁחַשׁ even when the context mandates rendering it as a pit or a place. While this is not sufficient evidence to argue that Psalm 16:10 can only be translated as pit, it does guard against accepting the Septuagint as the only viable interpretation.

We must also approach the understanding of שָׁחַשׁ from the context of Psalm 16. As was noted before, this verse is tied intricately with the psalmist's sense of joy over God's unending presence and direction in his life. That presence will exist even beyond death. The point of this verse is not the manner of escape from death but the affirmation that the communion with God will exist even beyond death.<sup>63</sup> The immediate context of verse

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<sup>63</sup>Weiser, p. 178.



ten also suggests that שׁוֹט be translated as pit. The second half of this couplet is in parallel to the first. With this in mind שׁוֹט stands in line with שׁוֹט and שׁוֹט becomes a synonym for Sheol. We also see in verse ten a parallel to verse four. In verse four those who sacrifice and worship other gods do not strive after God's presence and communion. These are the one who will suffer in Sheol, the place of the wicked.

As a result of this discussion it may be tentatively concluded that שׁוֹט in Psalm 16 is better understood as pit. This does not disregard the witness of the Septuagint and the New Testament since the Septuagint has translated שׁוֹט as φθόρα in other places where שׁוֹט refers to a place in the ground. Hence, the New Testament can be seen as an applied prophecy.<sup>64</sup> While the psalmist may not be visualizing a bodily resurrection, such an escape from the pit would be in harmony with an affirmation of God's presence and communion before and after death.

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<sup>64</sup>For a further explanation of the three different types of Messianic prophecy: direct rectilinear, typological, and applied, see Alfred von Rohr Sauer, "Problems of Messianic Interpretation," Concordia Theological Monthly 25 (October 1964), pp. 566-74.

CHAPTER III

PSALM 49

Hear this, all peoples!  
Give ear, all inhabitants of the world,  
The sons of mankind and the sons of man,  
Rich and poor together!  
My mouth shall speak wisdom;  
The meditation of my heart shall be understanding.  
I will incline my ear to a proverb;  
I will solve my riddle to the music of the cither.  
Why should I fear in times of trouble,  
When the iniquity of my enemies surrounds me,  
Men who trust in their wealth,  
And boast in the abundance of their riches?  
Truly no man can ransom himself,  
Or give to God the price of his life,  
For the ransom of his life is costly,  
And can never suffice,  
That he should continue to live forever  
And never see the Pit.  
Nay, he shall see that even the wise die,  
The fool and the senseless alike perish  
And leave their wealth to others.  
Their graves are their homes forever,  
Their dwelling places to all generations,  
Though they named lands their own.  
Man cannot abide in his pomp,  
He is like the beasts that perish.  
This is the fate of those who are self-confident,  
The end of those who are pleased with their portion.   Selah  
Like sheep they are appointed for Sheol;  
Death will be their shepherd.  
The upright shall rule over them in the morning;  
And their form shall waste away; Sheol will be their home.  
But God will ransom my soul from the hand of Sheol,  
For He will receive me.   Selah  
Be not afraid when one becomes rich,  
When the glory of his house increases.  
For when he dies he will carry nothing away;  
His glory will not go down after him.  
Though, while he lives, he counts himself happy,  
And though a man gets praise when he does well for himself,  
He will go to the generation of his fathers,  
Who will never more see the light.  
Man cannot abide in his pomp,  
He is like the beasts that perish.

While Psalm 16 has been viewed by only a few scholars as evidence of a resurrection from the dead, Psalm 49 has received greater support. Most of the attention is concentrated on verse fifteen. It is maintained that this verse refers not only to God's eternal presence with the wise but also to a physical assumption into heaven in the same manner as Elijah and Enoch. After we determine the context and the theme of this psalm, this verse will receive special consideration.

Psalm 49 is a wisdom psalm intended to answer the problem of social inequities between the rich who accumulate power through their wealth and the oppressed poor. Briggs analyzed it as a "lament of the pious over the riddle of death."<sup>65</sup> However, the question of death is not the problem but provides the answer to the situation. Included in this wisdom song is a discussion of the ultimate value of riches and what man's attitude should be to riches in his everyday life.<sup>66</sup>

After the introduction (v.1-4) which describes this psalm as a parable (  $\text{לְשׁוֹן}$  ) written to all the people, the author characterizes his wealthy opponents. These men rely upon their riches for success and use their wealth for power (v.6) to instill fear into the poor (v.5). Their riches have become an end in itself and their trust is placed only in these material and temporal possessions. While the poor may be envious of the

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<sup>65</sup>Briggs and Briggs, 1:405.

<sup>66</sup>Weiser, p. 385.

proud rich's power and might, both poor and rich alike face the same destiny of death. Even though there were times when capital punishment could be avoided by paying a ransom (Ex. 21:29-30, Prov. 13:8) no one could avoid death forever (v.9).<sup>67</sup> This is emphasized by the addition of the infinitive absolute  $\text{יָלַד}$  to the imperfect  $\text{יָלַד}$  in the text. In death man encounters God's power which surpasses any temporal power achieved through wealth.

The next three verses continue to echo this idea. Death is an equalizer since as the pious wise die so must the fools. Wealth loses its power in death since it must be left behind to others. In earthly life the proud rich enjoyed vast amounts of property, some even having lands named after them, but in death they will be cramped in their grave. Verse twelve is a refrain that will reoccur at the close of the psalm. Like the beasts of the field man will suffer inevitable death.

There is a slight shift in the topic in verses thirteen through fifteen. While the universal power of death was stressed in the previous three verses, now the attention turns to a comparison between the object of trust for the foolish rich and the pious. Those who foolishly place their confidence in their own person and power will suffer the fate of sheep under the direction of death. Here there may be a hint at the antithesis in which Yahweh is the shepherd of His people (Ps. 23:1, 80:2, 95:7).<sup>68</sup> In Sheol the bodies will decay and it will become

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<sup>67</sup> Arnold A. Anderson, Psalms, 2 vols. (London: Oliphants, 1972), I: 376.

<sup>68</sup> Briggs and Briggs, 1:410.

their final resting place. In contrast, there is a different consequence for those who place their hope in God. The psalmist is confident that as the wicked decay in Sheol the wise will be ransomed by God. If there would be no rescue from the place of the wicked for the righteous then the argument of the psalmist would be hollow. Without a ransom the wicked would be able to oppress the poor and still not suffer a different consequence for their sin.<sup>69</sup> It is obvious that in this passage Sheol is used as a place for the wicked, while in verse nine שׁוֹלֵם is used as the place of the dead, or death.

The final four verses and the refrain serve the purpose of a summary and exhortation. The poet's victory over his own fear and envy now becomes a model for the oppressed righteous. On the basis of the hope in being ransomed by God and the ultimate fate of the wicked, the righteous should not be afraid of the proud rich. The tragedy of the rich is that although their earthly life is filled with pleasures and self praise, they will still lose everything which was of most significance to them in death.<sup>70</sup> The fate of the wealthy is a gloomy life in the underworld where light does not penetrate.

Verse fifteen is the crucial verse for those who see a belief in eternal life and the resurrection of the dead in this psalm. With the insight we have gained from Ugaritic texts in

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<sup>69</sup> Anderson, 1:379.

<sup>70</sup> Briggs and Briggs, 1:410.

regards to the translation of  $\text{׃}$  as an emphatic particle,<sup>71</sup> a proper rendering of this verse would be, "But God will ransom me, from the hand of Sheol will He surely take me." This verse should be regarded as a parallel to verse seven which made the point that no man no matter how wealthy can use his power and riches to postpone death forever. Now verse fifteen shows an affirmation of faith that God will in some manner ransom the faithful from the punishment that is due the wicked. The psalmist is referring to a ransom from Sheol, the underworld, after death and not a ransom from death since all must die.<sup>72</sup> Due to the use of Sheol as a literal place in this psalm, the position of those who see it as a figurative expression for a deliverance from a sickness is untenable.<sup>73</sup>

The key word in this verse is  $\text{׃}$  from the root  $\text{׃}$ . This is a common verb in the Old Testament used with a variety of alterations from the basic meaning "to take." The significance of this verb is that it is also used in Enoch's translation (Gen. 5:24) and Elijah's ascension (II Kings 2:3,5, 9). It is also of interest that in Genesis 5 the Septuagint translates  $\text{׃}$  as  $\text{μετατίθημι}$  and that in the Wisdom of Solomon 4:10  $\text{μετατίθημι}$  is also used for the translation of the soul. Von Rad argued that  $\text{׃}$  had not only a technical nature in the Old Testament but also in Babylon.

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<sup>71</sup>Horace Hummel, "Enclitic Mem in Early Northwest Semitic," Journal of Biblical Literature 76 (1957), p. 102.

<sup>72</sup>Briggs and Briggs, 1:411.

<sup>73</sup>This erroneous opinion is seen in Piper, p. 126.

To take a man away belongs in its conciseness to a range of originally mythological concepts current in Israel, and also in Old Babylonia, namely that of "translation." Israel had already given clear expression to the idea that Yahweh had other realms at his disposal, and had the power and liberty to translate men into them.<sup>74</sup>

However, caution must be exercised since there are other examples of God taking man away which does not refer to a translation. As evidence for this we appeal to Psalm 18:16 which speaks of a plea for physical rescue. "He reached from on high, he took ( "אֶרְצָה") me, he drew me out of many waters."

Due to the commonness of אֶרְצָה Sutcliffe expressed skepticism about using it as proof of a physical resurrection. He concluded that the psalmist is expressing hope but he does not know in what manner that hope will appear.<sup>75</sup> Weiser was also in sympathy to this argument since he did not see the question of how this redemption is to be achieved in accord with the text.<sup>76</sup> In contrast Leo Perdue commented,

Any of these solutions as the specific meaning of the deliverance fit the context since all would be a redemption from some sort of death: freedom from slavery; escape from imminent catastrophe brought by plague or war; immortality or resurrection; healing of an illness; God's sending a go'el into the sphere of Sheol<sup>77</sup> to redeem the psalmist from death, and translation.

It is our opinion that while caution is necessary it is not out of the context of the psalm to refer to a bodily

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<sup>74</sup>Von Rad, 1:406.

<sup>75</sup>Sutcliffe, p. 102.

<sup>76</sup>Weiser, p. 390.

<sup>77</sup>Leo G. Perdue, "The Riddles of Psalm 49," Journal of Biblical Literature 76 (1957), p. 102.

resurrection. Here as in Psalm 16 we face the problem of whether the psalmist is speaking about a resurrection or can it just be inferred. While in Psalm 16 there was nothing in the context which indicated a bodily resurrection the case is different in Psalm 49. In addition to the technical nature of  $\pi p^{\prime} z$  the previous verse helps us to arrive at a different conclusion. Despite the corrupt text of verse fourteen it is still apparent that the psalmist believes the form ( $\pi \tau^{\prime} z$ ) of the proud rich will decay in the realm of the wicked. This is part of the penalty for being satisfied with only temporal power. Since the body is spoken of in this verse, there can be no reason to exclude it in verse fifteen. The resurrection of the body for the righteous would be a perfect antithesis to the decaying body of the wicked. In addition, the strength of the psalmist's argument would be weakened if he could not point to a proof that there is a difference between the proud rich and the righteous. If  $\pi p^{\prime} z$  can be taken as a technical term, its usage would certainly add credence to his argument. Therefore, a reference to a resurrection of the body for the righteous appears to be in harmony with the context.



CHAPTER IV

PSALM 116

I love Yahweh, because He has heard  
My voice and my supplications.  
Because He inclined His ear to me,  
Therefore I shall call upon Him as long as I live.  
The snares of death encompassed me;  
The pangs of Sheol laid hold on me;  
I suffered distress and anguish.  
Then I called on the name of Yahweh;  
"Oh Yahweh, I beseech You, save my life!"  
Gracious is Yahweh and righteous;  
Our God is merciful.  
Yahweh preserves the simple;  
I was brought low and He saved me.  
Return my soul to your rest;  
For Yahweh has dealt bountifully with you.  
For You have delivered my soul from death,  
My eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling;  
I may walk before Yahweh  
In the land of the living.  
I kept my faith, even when I said,  
"I am greatly afflicted;"  
I said in my distress,  
"All men are liars."  
What shall I render to Yahweh  
For all His benefits to me?  
I will lift up the cup of salvation  
And call on the name of Yahweh.  
I will pay my vows to Yahweh,  
In the presence of all His people.  
Precious in the sight of Yahweh  
Is the death of His saints.  
Oh Yahweh I am Your servant;  
I am Your servant, the son of Your handmaid.  
You have loosed my bonds.  
I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving,  
And call on the name of Yahweh.  
I will pay my vows to Yahweh  
In the presence of all His people.  
In the courts of the house of Yahweh,  
In your midst, Oh Jerusalem.  
Hallelujah!

At an initial glance Psalm 116 appears to have no connection with the thought of eternal life and the resurrection. Mitchell Dahood has challenged that contention with his translation of verses eight and nine.

For you, my soul, have been rescued from Death,  
you, mine eye, from Tears,  
you, my foot from Banishment.  
I shall walk before Yahweh  
in the Fields of Life.<sup>78</sup>

From this translation Dahood claimed that the psalmist was convinced that his future life would be spent in the presence of Yahweh in heaven.<sup>79</sup> His support for the translation of

𐤒𐤅𐤍 𐤕𐤓𐤕 as Fields of Life is from parallels in the Ugaritic where 𐤒𐤅𐤍 had a technical status meaning the after-life. This quotation from UT, 2 Aqht:VI:2 7-20 is appealed to for support.

Ask for life (hym) and I will give it to you  
Immortality (blmt) and I will bestow it upon you  
I will make you number years like Baal  
Like the gods you will number months.<sup>80</sup>

While the general tone of the psalm causes difficulty for determining a date of composition, it is easier to discover the place where the psalm is delivered. The psalmist appears before the congregation (v.14) to offer his testimony of thanksgiving (v.5,6,15) and then offers his sacrifice (v.14,16) in the courts of the temple.<sup>81</sup> The cup of salvation referred to in verse

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<sup>78</sup>Dahood, 3:148.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., 3:xivi.

<sup>81</sup>Sabourin, p. 292.

thirteen can either be a drink offering which was part of the thank offering (Num. 28:7), the cup of wine used at the cultic meals to signify the sharing of divine grace (perhaps Ps. 16:5),<sup>82</sup> a cup connected with some particular ordeal (Num. 5:16-28), or a metaphor of deliverance as an antithesis to the cup of Yahweh's wrath (Is. 51:17, Jer. 25:15).<sup>83</sup> From the connection with the votive offering it would be more reasonable to accept the first alternative. Finally, it should be noticed that this psalm is categorized as an individual thanksgiving psalm.

The psalm opens with a confession of love for Yahweh based upon His mercy in hearing the psalmist's prayers. Since God responded to the plea for rescue (v.4) and has been the strength in the past the psalmist will continue to pray to Yahweh. Verse three states in general terms the personal affliction of the psalmist. It must be realized that these expressions  $\text{לִי יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי$  and  $\text{לִי יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי}$  are used figuratively. While  $\text{לִי יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי}$  is used nowhere else in the Old Testament  $\text{לִי יְיָ}$  is associated with  $\text{אֱלֹהֵי}$  and  $\text{יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי}$  in the identical passages of Ps. 18:5,6 and II Sam. 22:5,6. These passages are ascribed to David as he was delivered from the hand of Saul and other enemies. It uses  $\text{לִי יְיָ}$  as a figurative expression of the closeness of death. We encountered this figurative expression previously in our discussion of Sheol. Moreover, salvation is not an expression of the afterlife but of rescue from a present problem (v.4).

Verses five through seven are a testimony of God's grace

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<sup>82</sup>Weiser, p. 175.

<sup>83</sup>Anderson, 2:794.

and mercy when he was afflicted. The return of the person (שׁוֹבֵי) to his resting place shows trust in God and His presence in the temple as the source of refuge. The temple as the resting place of God and the place where the closest communion with Him is found is also observed in Ps. 132:5-10.

Until I find a place for Yahweh,  
A dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob.  
Lo, we heard of it in Ephrathah,  
We found it in the fields of Ja'ar.  
"Let us go to His dwelling place;  
Let us worship at His footstool!"  
Arise, O Yahweh; and go to Your resting place,  
You and the ark of Your might.  
Let Your priests be clothed with righteousness,  
And let Your saints shout for joy.  
For Your servant David's sake  
Do not turn away the face of Your anointed one.

The next four verses are another part of the thanksgiving. There is thanks owed to God because of the deliverance from peril (v.8). Since verse nine needs to be analyzed in the light of the previous verse, the psalmist is referring to his deliverance from near death. He is able to walk once again with the living on earth. The main emphasis is not on where he walks but that he does it before Yahweh. The psalmist owes Yahweh his life and is bound now to do His will and be His servant (v.16). Thankfulness is also due God since during his affliction the faith in God's presence remained constant.

Verses twelve through nineteen should be seen in the context of the worship community since it reads in verse fourteen, "in the presence of all His people." The psalmist calls upon Yahweh to offer Him his votive offering and to testify of the love and faithfulness he has received. Not only is a sacrifice made but also a pledge of service. This pledge and sacrifice

were made in the courts of the temple and possibly in the courts of the priests.

Now we will return to the question of the  $\square^{\text{h}}\text{ן } \text{ף}7\text{ס}^{\text{c}}$ . We have already answered from the vantage point of the context that  $\square^{\text{h}}\text{ן } \text{ף}7\text{ס}^{\text{c}}$  refers not to an eternal life as proposed by Dahood, but a rescue from near death. Not only is this interpretation shown from the context but also from the other uses of  $\square^{\text{h}}\text{ן } \text{ף}7\text{ס}^{\text{c}}$  in the Old Testament. This idiom is used fourteen times and except in the Ezekiel passages they are all poetic. It is used in Is. 38:11, 58:8, Jer. 11:19, Job 28:13, Ps. 142:5, 52:5, 27:13, 116:8, Ez. 26:20, 32:23-27. In none of these references is there a positive identification of  $\square^{\text{h}}\text{ן } \text{ף}7\text{ס}^{\text{c}}$  as eternal life. Instead, they all refer to life lived on earth. Support for this can be indicated from a few examples.

The first example is the poem by King Hezekiah after his recovery from sickness.

I said, In the noontide of my days I must depart;  
I am consigned to the gates of Sheol for the rest of my  
years.  
I said, I shall not see Yahweh in the land of the living;  
I shall look upon man no more among the inhabitants of  
the world. (Is. 38:10-11)

The opening of Hezekiah's psalm shows distress over dying while still in the "noontide of my days." His anguish is exacerbated because he would no longer see Yahweh in the  $\square^{\text{h}}\text{ן } \text{ף}7\text{ס}^{\text{c}}$ .

What is meant by this is shown in verses eighteen and nineteen. It was believed that the dead in Sheol had no way to thank or praise God due to its perpetual silence and darkness. It was only the living on earth who could thank God. The parallel to verse eleven shows the comparison between the  $\square^{\text{h}}\text{ן } \text{ף}7\text{ס}^{\text{c}}$

and the inhabitants of the world. Moreover, life as used in verse sixteen is not eternal life but health and recovery from illness. Clearly this indicates  $\square^{\text{h}}\eta \text{ } \Upsilon\eta\aleph$  in this passage refers to earthly living.

Job 28:12-14 also uses this expression.

But where shall wisdom be found?  
And where is the place of understanding?  
Man does not know the way to it,  
And it is not found in the land of the living.  
The deep says, "It is not in me,"  
And the sea says, "It is not with me."

This wisdom psalm asks the question of the source and nature of wisdom. It is not found in man, who is associated with the land of the living, nor in the deep, which is synonymous with the sea. Man does not know its source even though he walks in the land of the living. The answer to this riddle is that wisdom comes from God (v.27) and that the fear of Yahweh is wisdom (v.28). The meaning of  $\square^{\text{h}}\eta \text{ } \Upsilon\eta\aleph$  as eternal life would make little sense in this passage that refers to following the way of the wise in one's earthly life.

The final passage we will look at is Psalm 142:5-7.

I cry to You, O Yahweh;  
I say, You are my refuge,  
My portion in the land of the living.  
Give heed to my cry;  
For I am brought very low!  
Deliver me from my persecutors;  
For they are too strong for me!  
Bring me out of prison,  
That I may give thanks to Your name!  
The righteous will surround me;  
For You will deal bountifully with me.

Here an individual is lamenting over his persecution (v.6) and perhaps an imprisonment (v.7). He has lost all means of escape but his hope remains with Yahweh who is his refuge and portion

( p<sup>4</sup>7n ). The persecutors are not an adversary of the afterlife but a present problem. However, since Yahweh, his portion, is with him there will be hope. The psalmist's confidence is in Yahweh who offers him physical protection in contrast to those men of verse four who offer him no security. It is in Yahweh that the psalmist hopes to walk unpersecuted once again with the rest of those on earth.

From these passages we have seen that  $\square^4n \gamma 7s$  is not used as an expression of the future life but of the present life. In addition to this conclusion, the snares of death and the pangs of Sheol are figurative expressions of affliction. Since these two statements are the only support for the contention that there is a belief in eternal life in this psalm, it must be concluded that Psalm 116 does not address this situation and cannot be used as a positive or negative witness.

## CHAPTER V

### PSALM 23

Yahweh is my shepherd, I shall not want;  
He makes me lie down in green pastures.  
He leads me beside quiet waters;  
He revives my life.  
He leads me in paths of safety  
For the sake of His name.  
Even though I walk through the valley of deep darkness,  
I fear no evil,  
For You are with me;  
Your rod and Your staff  
They comfort me.  
You prepare a table before me  
In the presence of my enemies.  
You anoint my head with oil;  
My cup overflows.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
All the days of my life,  
And I shall dwell in the house of Yahweh  
To the end of days.

While the book of Psalms is perhaps the most read book of the Old Testament, none of the 150 psalms is more familiar than Psalm 23. The imagery and theology of this psalm has attracted itself to its listeners. While it is not too difficult to categorize this psalm as an individual psalm of confidence, determining its precise setting is almost impossible. Ernest Vogt placed this psalm's origin in the cultic ceremony after a thanksgiving sacrifice.<sup>84</sup> Weiser also determined a cultic setting as he argued for the divine service as the inspiration for the writing about God's constant protection.<sup>85</sup> Because of the

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<sup>84</sup>Ernest Vogt, "The 'Place in Life' of Psalm 23," Biblica 34 (1953), p. 210.

<sup>85</sup>Weiser, p. 228.



reference to the temple in verse six a cultic setting seems appropriate although precisely the nature of that setting is not known. It is also mere conjecture to determine what prompted the composition of this psalm.

The psalm portrays Yahweh as shepherd (v.1-4) and host (v.5-6). The image of shepherd was common in the Near East as a symbol of authority, care and supervision. Due to the extreme heat and lack of water the sheep depended upon the shepherd for survival. Yahweh is the shepherd who finds good grazing, reviving waters, and the safe paths for His sheep (v.1-3). The words "restores my soul" as it has been traditionally read point not to a salvation of the soul, but a revival of life for the sheep who are refreshed with cool water after a hot day. The paths are not ones of righteousness, although this could be inferred, but paths that safely lead to the destination.<sup>86</sup> The care of the shepherd continues as he guides his sheep through deep darkness. Here the imagery points to the hill country of Judah which was divided by narrow ravines, wadies, which caused difficulty in transversing the hills. On these paths the shepherd protected his sheep from predators with his rod, which he used as a weapon, and his staff, which he used to keep the sheep on the right path.<sup>87</sup>

Verse five presents a different picture of a stranger

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<sup>86</sup>G. Ernest Wright and Reginald H. Fuller, The Book of the Acts of God. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1957), p. 188.

<sup>87</sup>E. Power, "The shepherd's two rods in modern Palestine and in some passages of the Old Testament (Ps. 23:4; Zech. 11:7ff; I Sam. 17:43)," Biblica 9 (1928), pp. 434-42.

being welcomed by a host. Although his enemies are still in close proximity it is the duty of the host in accordance with Near Eastern customs to protect his guest from harm.<sup>88</sup> Not only is the psalmist protected from harm, but after a long, hot day his head is anointed with perfumed oil and his cup of wine is filled to the brim. This goodness shown by the host will not be a one time affair but will take place the rest of the life of the psalmist as he continues to share in the worship of the temple. It is in the temple where the most intimate presence of God is found and where the psalmist can become most conscious of the nearness of God.<sup>89</sup> A similar thought occurs in Psalm 61:3-4.

Lead me to the rock that is higher than I  
 For You are my refuge,  
 A strong tower against the enemy.  
 Let me dwell in Your tent forever!  
 Oh to be safe under the shelter of Your wings!

First we will give attention to the word  $\text{שִׁוֹלֶשׁ}$ . This word has been interpreted in two major ways. The first option, which the Septuagint takes and has been the traditional understanding is that  $\text{שִׁוֹלֶשׁ}$  is a compound noun of  $\text{לֶשׁ}$  (shadow) and  $\text{שִׁוֹל}$  (death). The Septuagint translates it  $\sigma\kappa\iota\alpha \text{ } \epsilon\alpha\nu\acute{\alpha}\tau\omicron\upsilon$ . Those who see a scarcity of compound words in Hebrew prefer the second choice of  $\text{שִׁוֹלֶשׁ}$  as darkness. The first alternative though is not untenable. Since Gesenius noted that there are frequent compounds in the Old Testament with the combination of  $\text{שִׁוֹל}$  and other nouns,<sup>90</sup> the same could be the

<sup>88</sup> Briggs and Briggs, 1:210.

<sup>89</sup> Weiser, p. 230.

<sup>90</sup> William Gesenius, Hebrew Grammar, 2nd English ed., ed. E. Kautzsch, trans. A. E. Cowley. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1910), p. 478.

situation with שׁוֹן when שׁוֹן is seen not as death but as a superlative.<sup>91</sup> In English we would say, "bored to death." An example of this type of expression is I Sam. 5:11, "a deathly panic." Of the eighteen times<sup>92</sup> שׁוֹן is used in the Old Testament its meanings vary. It is used of a deep shadow or darkness in Amos 5:8 and Job 3:5, but it is also used as characterizing the world of the dead as in Job 10:21. From our context of sheep being led by a shepherd it fits more easily with a shadow. While one's own personal experience could substitute the meaning of death here, the context does not dictate that use. Rather it leans to understanding שׁוֹן as a shadow, or a thick darkness that late in the day creeps out over the wadies of Israel. In either case of שׁוֹן or שׁוֹן there is no intrinsic reference to Sheol or physical death in this passage.<sup>93</sup>

Another key phrase is שׁוֹן שׁוֹן . Dahood claimed that this is a reference to the heavenly dwelling of God. He extended the argument a bit further as he maintained, "After a peaceful life under the guidance and protection of Yahweh, the psalmist looks forward to eternal happiness in God's celestial abode."<sup>94</sup> However, in the Old Testament שׁוֹן שׁוֹן was an

<sup>91</sup>D. Winton Thomas, "שׁוֹן in the Old Testament," Journal of Semitic Studies 6 (1962), p. 196.

<sup>92</sup>Is. 9:1, Jer. 2:6, 13:16, Amos 5:8, Ps. 23:4, 44:19, 107:10,14, Job 3:5, 10:21,22, 12:22, 16:16, 24:17a,17b, 28:3, 34:22 and 28:17.

<sup>93</sup>Thomas, p. 197.

<sup>94</sup>Dahood, 1:145.

expression for the temple. The term  $\text{סֶדֶד}$  became a designation of other temples besides Yahweh's as in the house of Dagon (I Sam. 5:2,5, I Chr. 10:10), the house of Astarte (I Sam. 31:10), the house of El (Gen. 12:8), the house of Baal-berith (Judges 9:4), and the house of El-berith (Judges 9:46).<sup>95</sup> There are numerous references to the house of Yahweh as the temple (Ex. 23:19, 34:26, Dt. 23:18 are among the many). At the dedication of the temple (I Kings 8 and II Chr. 6) Solomon called it Yahweh's dwelling place. Due to their use in the temple the Psalms also express a high regard for the dwelling place of Yahweh. In the house of God His  $\text{טוֹן}$  is found (Ps. 5:7) and His blessings are secured (Ps. 118:26). In Psalm 122 the importance of going to the temple for worship is stressed.

I was glad when they said to me,  
 "Let us go to the house of Yahweh!"  
 Our feet have been standing within your gates,  
 O Jerusalem! (v.1-2)

The importance is that in the temple the closest communion with Yahweh was found. Therefore, there is no indication from this psalm and other parallels to it that  $\text{סֶדֶד}$  should be seen as referring to an eternal life in a heaven.

Closely connected to the house of Yahweh in verse six are the words  $\text{סֶדֶד}$ . This has also been taken as a reference to eternal life in heaven with God. This expression is used nine times in the Old Testament.<sup>96</sup> The two major meanings are of a

<sup>95</sup> Harry A. Hoffner, "  $\text{סֶדֶד}$  ," in Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament, vol. 2, ed. G. J. Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. John T. Willis. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975), p. 115.

<sup>96</sup> Dt. 30:20, Job 12:12, Lam. 5:20, Prov. 3:2,16, Ps.21:4, 23:6, 91:16, 93:5.

long life and eternity with the former one predominant. An example of the sense of eternity is attached to Psalm 93:5, "Thy decrees are very sure; holiness befits thy house, O Lord, forever." An example of long life is expressed in Job 12:12, "Wisdom is with the aged, and understanding in length of days." From the context of verse six, especially  $\text{ל} \text{ב} \text{ל} \text{ל} \text{ל}$  which refers to earthly living we must also relate  $\text{ל} \text{ב} \text{ל} \text{ל} \text{ל}$  to earthly life. Here again we find no explicit mention of eternal life.

The final argument of Dahood for eternal life in Psalm 23 derived from the word  $\text{ל} \text{ב} \text{ל} \text{ל} \text{ל}$ . He identified it as another technical term for the afterlife as was  $\text{ל} \text{ב} \text{ל} \text{ל} \text{ל}$  in Psalm 49. " $\text{ל} \text{ב} \text{ל} \text{ל} \text{ל}$  (to lead) is clearly recognized as to lead into Paradise."<sup>97</sup> Dahood suggested that Psalm 23 is similar to Psalms 5:8, 61:2, 73:24, and 139:24 in their expression of eternal life with the term  $\text{ל} \text{ב} \text{ל} \text{ל} \text{ל}$ . But in none of these passages is  $\text{ל} \text{ב} \text{ל} \text{ל} \text{ל}$  used for leading to Paradise. In 5:8 it is used as a guide to follow the right manner of earthly living, in 61:2 it is being led to Yahweh who is the refuge against any enemy, in 73:24 it refers to God's counsel and continual presence, and in 139:24 it is connected with the path that is devoid of wickedness. Only in the last passage can eternal life be imagined. In Psalm 23 Yahweh leads His sheep to a revivication at the quiet waters. The previous line speaks of another type of leading ( $\text{ל} \text{ב} \text{ל} \text{ל} \text{ל}$ ) which is used in the Old Testament for guiding one to a watering or resting place. With this parallel we should see  $\text{ל} \text{ב} \text{ל} \text{ל} \text{ל}$  as a

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<sup>97</sup> Dahood, 3:xivi.

synonym with <sup>ל</sup>אֵל and not in some special way by itself a reference to eternal life.

Here as in Psalm 116 we have analyzed all the basic arguments that would support the claim that there is evidence of a belief in eternal life. We have discovered that such a belief is not in this psalm and can only be put there by a subsequent reader as he relates his own experience.

## CONCLUSION

In the study of the Old Testament it is essential to understand the meanings of words by their usage. This has been the methodology of this paper. From this approach we have arrived at a different opinion than Mitchell Dahood and his claim for over forty references in the Psalms for a belief in eternal life and the resurrection. Our conclusion is not based on prior prejudice but on the study of Scripture itself.

Before any conclusion about the Old Testament's view of death and eternal life is made, it is necessary to understand the three different meanings of Sheol. While it remains the task of the exegete to distinguish these meanings, it is not possible to do so unequivocally. As a result there will remain discussions and debates regarding which way a passage is using Sheol. The three meanings though are clear in some passages. It is a reference to the grave, place for the dead, or death (Ps. 141:7), a place of the wicked dead or subterranean underworld (Is. 14:9-15), and a figurative expression of sickness or calamity (Jonah 2:3).

With this background we approached Psalms 16, 49, 116, and 23. Psalm 16 stresses the continual communion of Yahweh through life and even after death. While this is not an explicit reference to the resurrection, even though Paul interpreted it that way, this belief would be in accord with the theme of the psalm. On the basis of שְׁאֵל as the pit and אֵלֶּיךָ יְיָ

as an everyday path of life we concluded that the psalmist did not have the resurrection in mind as he wrote.

However, in Psalm 49 we reached a different conclusion. The answer to the problem of social inequities is solved in death. All must die, whether righteous or foolish, but the wicked will suffer a different fate than the pious. Here it is in complete harmony with the context, verse fourteen's reference to the body (גִּיּוֹן), and the technical nature of  $\text{קָם}$  to see a resurrection for the pious.

In Psalm 116 we observed that while there may be a technical nature to the words  $\text{קָם}$  in Ugaritic for the afterlife, this is not the case in the Old Testament. Of the fourteen times  $\text{קָם}$  is used it is concerned with life on earth and not life after death. As a result Psalm 16 is a psalm of thanksgiving to Yahweh for rescue from earthly afflictions and not a belief in eternal life.

In Psalm 23 we reached a similar conclusion to Psalm 116. While Dahood based support for a belief in eternal life on the words  $\text{בְּיַד יְהוָה}$ ,  $\text{בְּיַד יְהוָה}$ , and  $\text{לְיַד יְהוָה}$  these words do not support such a view. This psalm is an individual psalm of confidence in Yahweh because He shepherds and He hosts His people throughout their lives. To find a theme of eternal life in this psalm would be an extension of the psalmist's original thought and not the initial intent of the psalm.

There is no doubt from the passages in Daniel that there was a belief in the resurrection. However, to be faithful to our texts we must not put thoughts in them that are not originally



there. Caution must be exercised from reading preconceived notions into a text before an analysis of its theme, setting, and key words are done. Only after this thorough study can conclusions be made about individual passages.

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