

Editorial Strategy and Theological Development in Psalms 108-110: A Compositional Analysis of the Davidic Triptych

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1. Introduction

The Book of Psalms has long been recognized not merely as a collection of individual poems but as a carefully crafted literary whole.¹⁾ Scholarship has increasingly focused on the compositional and editorial aspects of the Psalter, moving beyond traditional form-critical approaches to examine how individual psalms function within their broader literary contexts.²⁾ This methodological shift has led to significant insights into the editorial processes that shaped the final form of the Psalter, particularly in understanding how existing materials were adapted and positioned to create new theological meanings.³⁾

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- 1) Gerald H. Wilson's groundbreaking work, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1985), has been foundational in establishing this perspective. See also Nancy L. deClaissé-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning: The Shaping of the Hebrew Psalter* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1997).
- 2) For an overview of this methodological shift, see D. M. Howard Jr., "Recent Trends in Psalms Study," in *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*, eds. D. W. Baker and B. T. Arnold (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1999), 329-368.

While my previous research on Psalm 108 studied the theological purpose and literary technique of how this psalm was directly excerpted from Psalms 57 and 60,⁴⁾ this study examines the strategic positioning of Psalm 108 within its broader literary context, particularly focusing on its role as a bridge between Psalm 107 and the Davidic Triptych (Psalms 108-110). While my earlier work explored the theological implications of Psalm 108 as a composite psalm, this investigation extends that analysis to understand how this psalm functions within the larger compositional strategy of Book Five of the Psalter. The placement of Psalm 108 in this position is particularly significant as it represents a deliberate editorial strategy. As a composite psalm combining portions of Psalms 57:8-12[7-11] and 60:7- 14[5-12], its positioning raises important questions about the editorial processes involved in the final formation of the Psalter.⁵⁾ This study demonstrates how the editor(s) skillfully adapted existing materials to create new theological meanings appropriate to the post-exilic context, particularly in addressing theodicean questions that emerge in the community's struggle with their current circumstances.⁶⁾

The significance of this research lies in several areas. First, it contributes to our understanding of editorial techniques in the Psalter by providing a detailed case study of how existing psalmic materials were adapted and repositioned.⁷⁾ Second, it

3) Erich Zenger's work has been particularly influential in this area. See Erich Zenger, "The Composition and Theology of the Fifth Book of Psalms, Psalms 107-145," *JSOT* 80 (1998), 77-102.

4) Jiseung Choi, "Recalling David and His Psalms after the Return: Focusing on the Themes of Psalms 57, 60, and 108." *KJOTS* 29/2 (2023), 163-188.

5) For the significance of Book 5's composition, see Nancy L. deClaissé-Walford, "The Canonical Approach to Scripture and The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter," in *The Shape and Shaping of the Book of Psalms: The Current State of Scholarship*, ed. Nancy L. deClaissé-Walford (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014), 1-11.

6) On theodicy in post-exilic psalms, see Walter Brueggemann, "Theodicy in a Social Dimension," *JSOT* 33 (1985), 3-25.

illuminates the theological creativity of the post-exilic community in reinterpreting earlier traditions.⁸⁾ Third, it demonstrates how careful attention to editorial strategy can reveal new dimensions of meaning in familiar texts.⁹⁾ Most importantly, it explores how Psalm 108 serves as a crucial theological bridge, connecting the themes of divine faithfulness in Psalm 107 with the messianic hope expressed in the Davidic Triptych.

The methodology employed in this study combines traditional form-critical insights with newer approaches to compositional analysis.¹⁰⁾ Particular attention is paid to linguistic connections between psalms, thematic development across psalm groupings, and the relationship between editorial technique and theological meaning.¹¹⁾ This approach allows us to appreciate both the individual character of each psalm and their collective function within the larger literary structure.¹²⁾

2. Methodological Framework

The study of the Psalter has undergone significant methodological shifts in recent decades, moving from atomistic ap-

7) This builds on methodological insights developed in David M. Howard Jr., *The Structure of Psalms 93-100* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997).

8) For post-exilic reinterpretation of traditions, see Rainer Albertz, "The Thwarted Restoration," in *Yahwism After the Exile: Perspectives on Israelite Religion in the Persian Era*, eds. Rainer Albertz and Bob Becking (Assen: Van Gorcum, 2003), 1-17.

9) This approach follows the methodological principles outlined in J. Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge and the Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).

10) On combining these approaches, see Klaus Seybold, *Introducing the Psalms*, trans. R. Graeme Dunphy (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990).

11) This methodology draws on insights from Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 3: A Commentary on Psalms 101-150*.

12) For this dual focus, see William P. Brown, *Seeing the Psalms: A Theology of Metaphor* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002).

proaches that focused on individual psalms to more holistic methods that examine the relationships between psalms and their placement within the larger collection.¹³⁾ This paradigm shift, often termed the “canonical approach” to psalms study, was initiated by Brevard Childs and substantially developed by Gerald Wilson.¹⁴⁾ Wilson's groundbreaking work demonstrated that the arrangement of psalms in their final form reflects intentional editorial decisions that create additional layers of meaning beyond the interpretation of individual psalms.¹⁵⁾

Recent scholarship has particularly focused on the composition and editing of Books Four and Five of the Psalter, with special attention to how these books reflect and respond to the challenges of the post-exilic period.¹⁶⁾ The work of Erich Zenger and Frank-Lothar Hossfeld has been instrumental in demonstrating how these later books of the Psalter show evidence of sophisticated editorial processes that reinterpret earlier psalm materials for new contexts.¹⁷⁾

The compilation and editing of the Psalter involved various editorial techniques that deserve careful attention. One significant technique is the creation of composite psalms, where existing psalm materials are combined and modified to create new compositions. Psalm 108 represents a prime example of this technique, combining portions of Psalms 57 and 60 in a way that creates new theological meanings appropriate to its post-exilic context.

13) For an overview of this methodological shift, see D. M. Howard Jr., “The Psalms and Current Study,” in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches*, eds. Philip S. Johnston and David G. Firth (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2005), 23–40.

14) Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 504–525.

15) Gerald H. Wilson, “The Use of Royal Psalms at the ‘Seams’ of the Hebrew Psalter,” *JOT* 35 (1986), 85–94.

16) deClaisé-Walford, “The Canonical Approach to Scripture,” 1–11.

17) Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 1–15.

Another important editorial technique is the strategic placement of psalms to create meaningful sequences and collections. The positioning of Psalm 108 at the beginning of the Davidic Triptych (Psalms 108-110) and following Psalm 107 appears to be a deliberate editorial decision that creates theological connections between these texts.¹⁸⁾ This placement suggests that the final editors of the Psalter were concerned not only with preserving individual psalms but also with creating meaningful relationships between them.

This study builds upon recent developments in psalms scholarship while maintaining a focused attention on the specific editorial and theological functions of Psalm 108 within its literary context. The methodology employed combines compositional analysis with linguistic, thematic, and historical-critical approaches to illuminate the psalm's strategic position and significance. By examining how Psalm 108 was created from its source materials, we can better understand how this composition serves its new context in Book 5. Careful attention to key terms and phrases reveals meaningful connections between Psalm 108 and its surrounding psalms, while tracing the development of theological themes across Psalms 107-110 illuminates the sophisticated editorial strategy at work. Throughout the analysis, consideration of the post-exilic context provides crucial insight into how these editorial choices addressed the needs of the faith community. This multi-faceted approach allows us to appreciate

18) Jerome F. D. Creach, "The Shape of Book Four of the Psalter and the Shape of Second Isaiah," *JOT* 80 (1998), 63-76; Kim Jung-woo and Kim Jin-hyun have previously explored methodologies for studying consecutive psalms with similar forms and content; however, my research focuses not so much on these similarities but rather on investigating the theological intentions of the editor who grouped these psalms together under the superscription 'A Psalm of David.' For more detailed information, please refer to the following article. "An Editorial Study of Pair Psalms in the First Book of the Psalter with Reference to the Wisdom and Royal Psalms," *Canon & Culture* 14/2 (2020), 117-152.

both the technical sophistication of the editorial process and its theological significance for the post-exilic community.¹⁹⁾

3. Psalm 108 as Theological Hinge: Connecting Post-Exilic Reality with Messianic Hope

In this chapter, I will attempt to examine the relationship between Psalm 108 and its contextual psalms, particularly Psalm 107, which leads Book 5 of the Psalms, and the other psalms of the Davidic Triptych (108-110). Psalm 108 appears to be redacted and located in a meaningful position to link these psalms thematically. Through this survey of the neighboring psalms and their connections, we aim to examine what kind of redactional intention lies behind this arrangement in terms of the positioning of Psalm 108.

3.1. Relationship with Psalm 107

As an opening psalm of Book 5, Psalm 107 reflects a differentiated situation from Book 4. Psalm 106:47, which is the last verse of Book 4 except for the doxology in v. 48, leaves a petition: “Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name and glory in your praise.” Psalm 107 answers this petition with thanksgiving to God, who redeemed from trouble and gathered in from the lands (vv.1-3).²⁰⁾ Scholars have understood these

19) This approach builds on the methodological framework developed in recent studies such as W. Dennis Tucker Jr., “Psalm 95: Text, Context, and Intertext,” *Bib.* 81 (2000), 533-541.

20) Zenger sees that 107:1-3 take up 106:1 and 106:47, so “presenting Psalm 107

two phrases as signs denoting their respective historical background and their exilic and post-exilic situations.²¹⁾

3.1.1. Form and Structure

The form and structure of Psalm 107 are crucial for understanding its relationship with Psalm 108. It is true that contents or individual genres do not alone decide the arrangement of the Psalms;²²⁾ however, considering the form of a certain psalm contributes to sketching the flow of the arrangement and its contextual relationship, as is the case with Psalm 107. Since Kraus divides this psalm into three elements (1, 4-32; 2-3; 33-43), there have been diverse suggestions by scholars on the details, but the old view of Kraus has set a general consensus.²³⁾

For our analysis focusing on the thematic and redactional connection, however, I will concentrate on the finalized structure according to its contents, though taking seriously the view of Kraus. This psalm has two different genres, and this distinction would be a reasonable starting point: vv. 1-32, and 33-43. The genre of the former is thanksgiving hymn with the repetitive phrase of 'יִרְדּוּ לַיהוָה חֲסִדוֹ וְנִפְלְאוֹתָיו לְבְנֵי אָדָם' (vv. 8, 15, 21, 31; cf. v. 1), and that of the latter is 'a general hymn that includes wisdom elements.'²⁴⁾ The division also occurs in vv. 1-3, which acts as an introduction.²⁵⁾ Although we could divide the second part (vv. 4-32) into four subdivisions, they all share

as an extension of 106:47". Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 101.

21) Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 110.

22) H. Gunkel, *Introduction to Psalms: The genres of the religious lyric of Israel*, ed. J. Begrich, trans. J. D. Nogalski (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1998), 334.

23) The oldest element is vv. 1, 4-32, vv. 2-3 are added at the post-exilic period, and vv. 33-43 are regarded as supplementary. Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, WBC 21 (Zondervan, 2021), 61.

24) Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, 60.

25) This part also acts as an introduction of whole Book 5.

similar structure and theme, so we consider them together as one whole. Lastly, vv. 42-43 can be detached from the preceding section to make a closing wisdom exhortation.²⁶⁾ From these brief observations we can divide as shown below:

Verses	Contents
107:1-3	Introduction
107:4-32	Four narratives about God's salvation
107:33-41	Wisdom hymn
107:42-43	Wisdom exhortation

3.1.2. Linguistic connection

Although Psalm 108 is a composite psalm and not newly composed poetry, Psalm 107 and 108 share a number of words that show the linguistic connection. Firstly, **חֲסֵד** is the most important term to reveal the linguistic connection between two psalms. In the repetitive phrase of Psalm 107, **חֲסֵד** appears with 3rd person suffix denoting God in vv. 1, 8, 15, 21, 31, and 43.²⁷⁾ Particularly, this term is located in both the first and last verse, and so by chiasmic structure demonstrates its crucial significance. Secondly, as surveyed in my previous research, the modification of God's name, from the address **אֱלֹהֵי** of Psalm 57:10 to **יְהוָה** in 108:4, is also worthy of consideration here.²⁸⁾ By the unnatural change to **יְהוָה**, Psalm 108 acquires now the linguistic connection with **חֲסֵדֵי יְהוָה** in Psalm 107:43. Lastly, **צָר** is mentioned both in Psalm 107:2 and in 108:13-14 as the oppressor who causes the people of Israel cry out for the salvation of God.

26) Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 103.
27) At the last verse (v. 43), by designating the lovingkindness is of Yahweh (**חֲסֵדֵי יְהוָה**), its origin vividly reveals.
28) Jiseung Choi, “Recalling David and His Psalms after the Return: Focusing on the Themes of Psalms 57, 60, and 108.” *KJOTS* 29/2 (2023), 163-188.

3.1.3. Thematic connection

The themes that connect two psalms are closely related with the linguistic connection also. As we have seen above, **חֶסֶד** is the very crucial theme both in Psalms 107 and 108. For the intention of expressing this connection more vividly, the redactor of Psalm 108 seems to modify even the address to God in v. 4. As a leading psalm of Book 5, Psalm 107 contains an image of gracious and merciful love of God, and this is expressed by the repetitive usage of **חֶסֶד**. In the case of Psalm 108, as a logical base of the petition for the salvation, the speaker emphasizes **חֶסֶד** more than **אַמֶּת** intentionally. The theme of lovingkindness is also continued by the theme of God's salvation, because this salvation act is due to the benevolence of God, that is, **חֶסֶד**. This salvation is mentioned as the victory from their **צָר** in Psalm 108, contrasted against the redeeming from **צָר** in 107.

Furthermore, we can observe a certain thematic elevating or development concerning the problem of dealing with their neighbors. In Psalm 107, the speaker only mentions the theological statement that they are redeemed and gathered from their enemies, and exhorts the reader to consider (**בִּיַּן**) the wisdom that God saves them and rules everything. However, Psalm 108 takes one step further from the thanksgiving and remembrance of the love of God. On the basis of these themes, the petition of Psalm 108 cries for victory against their enemies. Not just sitting idly in the present situation, returning from the exile, the speaker of Psalm 108 advances to beg a triumph against their surrounding enemies.

3.1.4. Conclusion

The meaningful location of Psalm 108 in respect to Psalm 107 shows us that the redactor deliberately makes this Psalm

by composition, designing the thematic connection between Psalms 107 and 108. Their close relationship is revealed not only by several linguistic evidences, but also by the thematic flow and development. Psalm 107, as a leading psalm of Book 5 that reflects post-exilic theology, turns the theological perspective on their post-exilic condition over to Psalm 108. Not stopping at just succeeding the inherited themes, Psalm 108 elaborates those theological meanings to their new circumstances surrounded by their enemies. It is not an easy task to lead such poetry into having an intimate connection with another psalm using pre-existing materials by composition, but the redactor of Psalm 108 accomplished this work here.

3.2. Relationship among the Davidic Triptych

In this section, the manner in which Psalm 108 begins the so-called Davidic Triptych (108-110) will be examined. I have suggested above that Psalm 108 is asking the theodicean question but nothing is yet resolved. With this point of view, my concern is on the way these psalms are related and thus answer the question. Surveying the respective relationship of Psalm 108 with Psalm 109 and 110, subsequently the study on the overall theological and thematic connection will follow.

3.2.1. Psalm 109

A surprising imprecation poetry, Psalm 109 follows 108 and makes a significant turning point in the thematic flow and also in the mood. Considering the intimacy of the contents of Psalm 108 and 110 in the following section, Psalm 109 interrupts them in a markedly strange way.²⁹⁾ This positioning would be due to the redactional intention to make a chiastic scheme in

the Davidic Psalter, thus another emphasis is also on the theme of Psalm 109. As with the research process of Psalm 107, I will survey first the form and structure, and then move to its thematic connection with Psalm 108.

Form and Structure

Psalm 109 exhibits a typical pattern of individual lament: ‘appeal to God with sorrowful description of the crisis (vv. 1-20)’; ‘appeal to God with a plea for an end to the distress (vv. 21-29)’;³⁰⁾ vow of praise (vv. 30-31).³¹⁾ But this psalm has an extraordinary number of ‘imprecation and ill-wishing’ petition, so it is called a ‘curse psalm.’³²⁾

BHS suggests its structure as 1-5; 6-20; 21-31; and this is a reasonable division regarding two factors, transitional words and different contents. We can add one more division in the third part; 21-29; 30-31 for the same reason. In the beginning of verse 6, in contrast to having been using the narrative verb form (imperfect waw consecutive), הִפְקֵד (*hiphil imperative*) turns the mood of the petition to that of a curse. By following serial jussive verbs until v. 15, the imprecation message continues in this tone. Although the verb form has changed from verse 16 onwards, the main stream of the message is still in the form of a curse to the end of verse 20. The third part begins with the phrase, וְאַתָּה יְהוָה אֱדָנִי (v. 21), which indicates that here is the transition point of the theme. In terms of the contents, the message is changed from a curse to a petition for salvation. The last change of the verb form occurs at verse 30. By adopting

29) Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 136.

30) Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 128.

31) Allen, *Psalms* 101-150, 76.

32) Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 2, and Lamentations*, FOTL 5 (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2021), 257.

the cohortative phrase, אִוְרָה יְהוָה, the last section is clearly demarcated from the third.

Therefore, I suggest the structure of Psalm 109 as follows:

Verses	Contents
1-5	Opening petition about false accusation
6-20	Imprecations against the oppressors
21-29	Plea for the deliverance and help of God
30-31	Closing praise for the salvation of God

Linguistic and Thematic Connections

As shown above, Psalm 109 cedes its greatest portion to the imprecation message, but the petition for salvation is also emphasized by its inclusion in both the beginning and the ending. Because of its unique contents, it is hard to find a linguistic connection between this imprecation part and Psalm 108,³³⁾ but in other parts we can find some words being connected with its former context.

As Psalm 108 takes חָסֵד as the firm basis to proceed with the petition for God, Psalm 109 is also begging the salvation standing on His lovingkindness (109:21, 26). עֵזר is found in Psalm 109:26 and 108:13, אִוְרָה (Hiphil cohortative ירָה) in 109:30 and 108:4. יָמִין is also used both in Psalm 109:31 and in 108:7, but its usage is quite different.³⁴⁾ The former uses this term only for the metaphor that God stands at 'my' side, but the latter implies the mighty power of God by this term. And שָׁטָן, the synonym of צָר (108:13-14), is used in 109:20, 29.

As with the case of Psalm 107, the linguistic connections between Psalms 108 and 109 reflect thematic relation also. חָסֵד and עֵזר together make a theme of salvation of God. יָמִין shows a slightly different usage. This term relates to the theme of God

33) Psalm 109 shares a number of words with Psalm 107. See, Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 136.

34) Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 136.

the warrior in Psalm 108, however, Psalm 109 adopts this the theme of salvation.

In terms of the theme of adversary, Psalm 108 and 109 share this notion semantically but there are slight differences in details. In the former, the perspectives on the enemies have been universalized. 'Edom has become the symbol of all the enemies of God and God's people.'³⁵⁾ By intra-textual analysis above, I have seen how Psalm 108 renders its message to fit into the new circumstance of the faith-community. From this understanding, the metaphors of Psalm 108 gain broader hermeneutical meanings that can be applied in their lives. In contrast, the oppressors of Psalm 109 are likely in the inner boundary of community, considering that the speaker tried to love them. As mentioned above, the sequence of Psalms 108-110 is seen as a chiasitic structure. A pair of psalms consisting the outer boundaries deal with the theme of 'foreign political dimension', but Psalm 109 is talking about 'domestic political dimension.'³⁶⁾

3.2.2. Psalm 110

As one of the most frequently cited messianic psalms, Psalm 110 has garnered considerable scholarly attention. Given its messianic characterization and established priesthood metaphor, this psalm develops a distinctive theological character.³⁷⁾ To avoid a danger of engaging in researching this interesting psalm too much, we need to restrict our interest to its connection with Psalm 108.

35) Raymond Jacques Tournay, *Seeing and Hearing God with the Psalms: The Prophetic Liturgy of the Second Temple in Jerusalem*, JSOTSup 118, trans. by J. Edward Crowley (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1991), 181.

36) Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 136.

37) Consult with the bibliography in Zenger, *Psalms* 3, 139-140.

Form and Structure

For the reason that Psalm 110 appears fragmentary, being combining of at least two different oracles, this psalm does not follow the typical form of messianic or royal psalm. Gerstenberger suggests its genre as ‘Messianic Promise.’ He sees this psalm as being used ‘in connection with other songs focusing on “royal” figures.’³⁸⁾

From the fact that there are separated double oracles, this psalm is easily divided into two parts.³⁹⁾ In the end of the first part (vv. 1-3), a noun clause (v. 3) is stated with a prayer nuance.⁴⁰⁾ The following verse (v. 4) initiates with another introductory phrase (נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה) the second oracle, thus the psalm is well delineated into two parts. The constituents of each parts are shown below:

Verses	Contents
1-3	First oracle about the lord who sit at the right hand of God
4-7	Second oracle about Priest like Melchizedek

Linguistic Connections

As the redactional change occurs in the address from אֲדָנִי (57:10) to יְהוָה (108:4), יְהוָה is dominantly used as the name of God in Psalm 110 (vv. 1, 2, 4). Even in all the following psalms (110-150), יְהוָה is called for the name of God. This supports a thought that the redactor of Psalm 108 was involved in the whole redactional process of Book 5.

Another synonym of enemy, אֹיֵב, is used in verse 2. Each of the three psalms of the Davidic Triptych use different syno-

38) Gerstenberger, *Psalms*, Part 2, 266-267.
39) cf. BHS suggests two division vv 1-4; 5-7; Gerstenberger, *Psalms*, Part 2, 263.
40) *JM*, §154. e.

nym of enemy ('צַר' in 108; 'שָׁטָן' in 109; 'אֹיֵב' in 110). Although we cannot assure that these diverse usage is intentional, the notion of oppressor is obviously shared by all three psalms.

As with the other psalms of this collection, 'יָמִין' is also used, but twice in this psalm (vv. 1, 5). The first usage of this term seems to be similar of the one of Psalm 109:31, in contrast, the second usage has a closer meaning with that of Psalm 108:7. Thus, by the metaphor of 'right' the Davidic Psalter spreads two kind of meaning, that is, the mightiness of God with right hand (108:7; 110:1) and the intimacy of God standing to the right side (109:31; 110:5).

Thematic Connections

<God the mighty warrior>

Psalm 110 describes God as the mighty warrior from the beginning to the end. God told 'my lord' to 'sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool (הֶרֶם).' BDB suggests this term as the image of 'conquest of enemies of Messianic king by Yahweh's agency.' 'The lord' will rule in the midst of the foes (v. 2), even on the day of his wrath 'he' shall shatter kings, and execute judgment among the nations (v. 5-6). Finally, he will lift up his head in an imaginary scene of a celebration with a triumphant laugh (v. 7). As already shown above, Psalm 108 also bears the image of God as the mighty warrior.

<Davidic kingship>

It is important that Psalm 110 are dedicated to David (or written by David), however, in its contents, we cannot observe any evidences to denote directly David or any king of inherited Davidic kingship. Although 'my lord (אֲדֹנָי, v.1)' has been accepted in the Israelite history as a messianic character who in-

herited Davidic Kingship, this understanding is actually not supported by any direct literary evidences. Nonetheless, the reception history of this psalm reveals to us that the faith-community of Israel had accepted the messianic character of Psalm 110 as a Davidic descendent. With the superscriptions of the Davidic Psalter, Psalm 108-110 share the theme of David.

<Your enemies>

Quoting Ballhorn's view, Tucker suggests the primary theme of the Davidic Triptych as 'the threat of the foreign nations.'⁴¹⁾ As shown above, Psalm 110 also shares the theme of foe with the preceding psalms, but the foe is now mentioned as 'your enemies' (אִיְבֹיָךְ, v. 2). Preceding psalms regard their enemies seriously and pray for the salvation of God, Psalm 110 shows a totally different perspective on this theme. Now God himself concerns these enemies in his own way, and they are not regarded as the enemies of the people of Israel. Tucker well notices in Psalm 108 and 110 that 'the metaphor of the right hand is employed in order to signal the routing of the enemies by YHWH.'⁴²⁾

3.2.3. Conclusion

Now we should evaluate the theological meaning of the thematic relationship between Psalm 108 and the Davidic Psalter and the arrangement in terms of the position of Psalm 108. This overall research aims to discern the reason why the redactor of Psalm 108 put this psalm into this literary locus.

41) Tucker W. Dennis Jr. "The Role of the Foe in Book 5: Reflections on the Final Composition of the Psalter," In *The Shape and Shaping of the Book of Psalms*, Ancient Israel and Its Literature 20, ed. DeClaissé-Walford Nancy L. (Atlanta: SBL, 2014), 183.

42) Tucker, "The Role of the Foe in Book 5," 187.

deClaissé-Walford leaves significant words on the developing of the book of Psalms. “The story of the shaping of the Psalter is the story of the shaping of survival. The Psalter was, along with the other texts that make up the Hebrew Scriptures, a constitutive document of identity for postexilic Israel. Within that collection of texts, the community of faith found a new structure for existence and identity that transcended traditional concepts of nationhood.”⁴³⁾ Although she generally referenced the shaping of the Psalter by these phrases, these properly correspond to the redaction of the Davidic Triptych also, as I have observed.

All three of these psalms deal with the theme of enemies, and for this factor make the speakers of these psalms rely on the salvation of God. God is drawn as a mighty character, and this mighty warrior conquers their and His enemies. Psalm 108 occupies an important literary locus, connects these thematic flow, and leads the Davidic Psalter by asking the rhetorical question on the theodicean problem. This question grows through Psalm 109 and finally has been answered in Psalm 110.

3.3. Conclusion

As an introductory psalm of Book 5, Psalm 107 expresses overwhelming joy at the return from exile. However, the situation of the faith-community did not remain in this hopeful message; new enemies arose from both within and outside the community, and the people of Israel faced new troubles in their changed circumstances. Psalm 108 inherits the themes of its preceding psalm and attempts to interpret the old Davidic promise that has been given in the Davidic Psalter within this new situation.⁴⁴⁾

43) Nancy L. deClaissé-Walford, Rolf A. Jacobson, and Beth LaNeel, *The Book of Psalms*, NICOT (Eerdmans, 2014), 38.

Psalm 108 not only introduces the themes that will be shared by the Davidic Triptych, such as God the mighty warrior, enemies, and hidden God, but also raises a question about the complex theological problem that all these themes pose. This thematic connection is revealed in their chiastic structure (A [108] - B [109] - A'[110]), and also in the thematic progression through this Davidic collection. From this perspective, Psalm 109 develops the thematic flow more intensely, and Psalm 110 resolves the theological conflict and the question that Psalm 108 has raised.

From this understanding, we can trace the redactional intention behind the composition of Psalm 108. In the process of redacting Book 5, the editor appears to have recognized the need for a particular psalm to link Psalms 107, 109, and 110. Rather than composing an entirely new psalm, the redactor chose a more challenging alternative: combining sources with overall thematic familiarity. Through this method, the redactor also establishes a close connection with the old Davidic promise.

4. Theological Development through Psalms 107-110

The theological development from Psalm 107 through the Davidic Triptych (108-110) represents a sophisticated editorial strategy that addresses the faith challenges of the post-exilic community. This progression moves from thanksgiving for return (Psalm 107) through theodicean questioning (Psalm 108-109) to messianic resolution (Psalm 110). In this chapter, we will examine this theological movement and its significance for understanding the editorial strategy in Book 5 of the Psalter.

44) Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, trans. D. R. Ap-Thomas (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1962), 2:59.

4.1. From Thanksgiving to Theodicy

The theological movement from Psalm 107 to the Davidic Triptych represents more than just a shift in genre or mood; it reflects the complex reality of post-exilic faith. While Psalm 107 celebrates the return from exile with overwhelming joy, the subsequent psalms reveal that return itself did not resolve all theological questions. Instead, new challenges arose that required fresh theological reflection.

4.1.1. The Dialectic of Return and Reality

Psalm 107's thanksgiving for return establishes the foundational reality of God's faithfulness. The repeated refrain of **סִיֵּן** creates a powerful affirmation of divine commitment to Israel's restoration. However, this very affirmation creates tension with the ongoing experience of difficulty and opposition that the post-exilic community faced. This tension provides the theological context for the questions raised in Psalm 108.

4.1.2. Theodicean Questioning in a New Context

The questioning that emerges in Psalm 108 is not a simple doubt of God's faithfulness - the psalm's very composition affirms this faithfulness by its emphasis on **סִיֵּן**. Rather, it represents a mature theological wrestling with how divine faithfulness operates in the complex reality of post-exilic life. The psalm moves beyond both simple gratitude and simple doubt to engage in sophisticated theological reflection.

4.1.3. Theological Resolution through the Davidic Triptych

The progression through Psalms 108-110 demonstrates a carefully crafted theological development that addresses the tensions raised by the post-exilic experience. This development moves through three stages that together form a coherent theological response to the community's questions.

First, Psalm 108 frames the theological question in terms that connect both backwards to the thanksgiving of Psalm 107 and forwards to the messianic hope of Psalm 110. By combining portions of Psalms 57 and 60, it creates a new theological framework that acknowledges both divine faithfulness and present difficulty. The psalm's emphasis on **יָסָד** serves not only to connect it with Psalm 107 but also to ground its questioning in fundamental trust.

Second, Psalm 109's intense imprecatory language represents not merely personal anger but the depth of theological wrestling required by the post-exilic situation. The psalm's movement from curse to praise mirrors the larger movement from question to resolution in the triptych as a whole. Its focus on internal enemies complements the external threats addressed in Psalms 108 and 110, creating a comprehensive treatment of the community's challenges.

Finally, Psalm 110's messianic vision provides resolution not through simple answers but through a transformed perspective. The shift to describing enemies as "your enemies" (**אֹיְבֶיךָ**) rather than "our enemies" signals this transformation. The theological resolution comes through seeing the community's struggles within the larger context of divine kingship and purpose.

4.2. Editorial Strategy in Book 5

4.2.1 Psalm 108 as Strategic Bridge

The positioning of Psalm 108 reveals a sophisticated editorial strategy that operates simultaneously on multiple theological and literary levels. As a bridge between Psalm 107 and the Davidic Triptych, it facilitates crucial theological transitions while maintaining thematic coherence across the collection. The psalm's strategic location enables it to guide readers from the thanksgiving of Psalm 107 into the deeper theological questioning that characterizes the Davidic Triptych. This transition is accomplished not through abrupt change but through careful development of shared themes and motifs. The psalm establishes key theological concepts that will find fuller expression through the triptych, particularly in its treatment of divine הָיָה and its wrestling with questions of divine absence and presence. Perhaps most significantly, this bridging position allows Psalm 108 to connect the post-exilic community's present experience with their inherited Davidic traditions. By combining and recontextualizing materials from Psalms 57 and 60, it demonstrates how ancient faith expressions can speak to new circumstances while preserving their essential character. This sophisticated editorial work suggests careful attention not only to thematic development but also to the psychological and spiritual needs of the community navigating significant theological transitions.

4.2.2. Implications for Book 5

The strategic positioning of this collection within Book 5 has broader implications for understanding the editorial strategy of the Psalter. Several key aspects deserve attention:

Thematic Development

The transition from Psalm 107's thanksgiving through the theological wrestling of the Davidic Triptych establishes a pattern that influences the reading of subsequent psalms in Book 5. This movement from gratitude through questioning to resolution provides a hermeneutical key for understanding similar patterns throughout the book.

Identity Formation

The careful integration of pre-exilic Davidic materials (Psalms 57 and 60) into a post-exilic context through Psalm 108 demonstrates how the editors used existing traditions to address new circumstances. This process of reinterpretation played a crucial role in forming post-exilic community identity.

Theological Method

The way the collection handles difficult theological questions provides insight into post-exilic theological methodology. Rather than avoiding tension, the arrangement acknowledges and works through it, suggesting a mature approach to theological reflection.

4.3 Conclusion

The theological development through Psalms 107-110 reveals sophisticated editorial work that goes beyond mere arrangement of texts. Through careful positioning and thematic development, these psalms address fundamental questions of post-exilic faith while providing resources for ongoing theological reflection. The strategic positioning of Psalm 108 proves crucial to this accomplishment. By bridging Psalm 107 and the Davidic

Triptych, it facilitates a theological movement that both acknowledges post-exilic challenges and affirms continuing divine faithfulness. This editorial strategy demonstrates how the post-exilic community used existing traditions to address new circumstances while maintaining continuity with their theological heritage.

5. Conclusion

This study has examined the strategic positioning of Psalm 108 between Psalm 107 and the Davidic Triptych (Psalms 108-110). Building upon previous research that established the theological significance of Psalm 108 as a composite psalm, this investigation has revealed sophisticated editorial work that addresses fundamental questions of post-exilic faith through careful arrangement and thematic development.

The analysis of Psalm 108's position following Psalm 107 reveals a deliberate theological progression. As the opening psalm of Book 5, Psalm 107 expresses thanksgiving for return from exile through repeated emphasis on divine יְהוָה. Psalm 108 inherits this theme but develops it in a new direction, using it as the basis for addressing theodicean questions arising from post-exilic challenges. This progression demonstrates how the editor(s) used existing materials to help the community wrestle with new theological challenges while maintaining continuity with their traditions.

The relationship between Psalm 108 and the Davidic Triptych reveals further editorial sophistication. The chiasmic structure (A[108]-B[109]-A'[110]) allows for comprehensive treatment of both external and internal challenges while moving toward theological resolution. The progression from initial questioning through intense struggle to messianic hope provides a

model for mature theological reflection.

The analysis of Psalm 108's positioning yields several significant implications for our understanding of both editorial technique and theological development in the Psalter. The careful integration of pre-exilic materials from Psalms 57 and 60 into Psalm 108 reveals a sophisticated editorial approach that does more than merely preserve ancient traditions. Instead, it demonstrates how the editors functioned as creative theologians, actively responding to their community's needs while maintaining continuity with their heritage. This editorial sophistication is particularly evident in how the arrangement facilitates theological development through the collection. The movement from thanksgiving through questioning to resolution exemplifies a mature theological approach that addresses difficult questions while remaining grounded in fundamental faith commitments. Such thoughtful progression suggests similar patterns might be found elsewhere in the Psalter's handling of theological tension.

Perhaps most significantly, this arrangement played a crucial role in identity formation for the post-exilic community. By strategically positioning these psalms to connect contemporary experience with both recent deliverance (Psalm 107) and ancient traditions (Davidic materials), the editors helped their community locate themselves within God's ongoing work. This sophisticated integration of past and present through careful psalm arrangement provided essential resources for community self-understanding in challenging circumstances.

These findings suggest several promising directions for future research. The relationship between this collection and other strategic psalm groupings in Book 5 deserves further investigation, as does the broader role of composite psalms in editorial strategy throughout the Psalter. Particularly intriguing is the development of messianic themes from theodicean questioning in post-exilic texts, a pattern that might illuminate similar develop-

ments elsewhere in biblical literature. The sophisticated editorial work evident in Psalm 108's positioning suggests that continued attention to psalm arrangement may yield valuable insights into both the formation of the Psalter and the theological reflection of the post-exilic community.

<Keywords>

Davidic Triptych, Psalm 108, Editorial Strategy, Post-exilic Theology, Psalm Composition

<주제어>

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<Abstract>

**Editorial Strategy and Theological Development
in Psalms 108-110:
A Compositional Analysis of the Davidic Triptych**

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This study examines the strategic positioning of Psalm 108 within the broader context of Psalms 107-110, focusing on its role as a bridge between Psalm 107 and the Davidic Triptych (Psalms 108-110). Through detailed analysis of linguistic connections, thematic development, and editorial techniques, the research demonstrates how the positioning of Psalm 108 facilitates crucial theological transitions while maintaining thematic coherence. The study reveals sophisticated editorial work that addresses fundamental questions of post-exilic faith through careful arrangement and development of themes. Particular attention is given to how the editors integrated pre-exilic Davidic materials into a post-exilic context, demonstrating their role as creative theologians responding to contemporary community needs while maintaining continuity with inherited traditions. The findings contribute to our understanding of both editorial technique and theological development in the Psalter, suggesting new directions for research into psalm arrangement and post-exilic theological reflection.

<초록>

시편 107-110편의 편집 전략과 신학적 발전:

시편 108편의 구성적 위치에 관한 연구

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본 연구는 시편 108편의 전략적 위치를 시편 107-110편의 광범위한 맥락 안에서 검토하며, 특히 시편 107편과 다윗 삼부작(시편 108-110편) 사이의 가교 역할에 주목한다. 언어적 연관성, 주제 발전, 편집 기법에 대한 상세한 분석을 통해, 시편 108편의 배치가 주제적 일관성을 유지하면서 중요한 신학적 전환을 어떻게 촉진하는지를 보여준다. 이 연구는 신중한 배열과 주제 발전을 통해 포로기 이후 신앙의 근본적 질문들을 다루는 정교한 편집 작업을 드러낸다. 특히 편집자들이 포로기 이전의 다윗 관련 자료들을 포로기 이후 맥락에 통합하는 방식에 주목하여, 이들이 전승된 전통과의 연속성을 유지하면서 동시대 공동체의 필요에 응답하는 창조적 신학자로서 기능했음을 보여준다. 이러한 발견은 시편의 편집 기법과 신학적 발전에 대한 이해에 기여하며, 시편 배열과 포로기 이후 신학적 성찰에 관한 새로운 연구 방향을 제시한다.

