

# Israel's Relationship with the Glory of God in Psalms

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Charles Ryrie identifies the third *sine qua non* of dispensationalism as the glory of God. One area he notes where the glory of God is realized is in God's purpose for the Jewish people.<sup>2</sup> However, Ryrie does not detail specifically the relationship between the glory of God and his people, Israel.<sup>3</sup>

Since it has long been recognized that the book of Psalms is a microcosm of the theological message of the OT, this observation allows for a legitimate and somewhat manageable study of the nature of Israel's relationship with the glory of God within the Psalms as a possible synopsis of the entire OT.

## *Identifying Terms*

The concept of the "glory of God" does not always appear in the Psalms simply as כְּבוֹד־אֱלֹהִים; indeed, throughout the Psalms it appears in a number of diverse ways.<sup>4</sup> It is כְּבוֹדִי, "my glory," as predicate nominative of LORD (Ps 3:4). There is כְּבוֹד־אֱלֹהִים, "glory of God" (19:2), and מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד, "king of glory" (24:7-10). "Your glory," כְּבוֹדְךָ, appears on a number occasions: "your glory" refers to the LORD's glory which resided at the temple (26:8), is seen in the temple (63:2), is over all the earth (57:6, 12 and 108:6), and is also feared by all the kings of the earth (102:15). There is

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<sup>2</sup> Charles C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism: Revised and Expanded* (Chicago: Moody, 2007), 95.

<sup>3</sup> In his *Dispensationalism: Revised and Expanded*.

<sup>4</sup> I am looking for phrases that include "glory," כְּבוֹד, and connection with God.

also אֱלֹהֵי־כְבוֹד, “the God of glory” (29:3); כְּבוֹד שְׁמוֹ, “the glory of his name” (66:2); שֵׁם כְּבוֹדוֹ, “his glorious name” (72:19); עַל־דֶּבַר כְּבוֹד־שְׁמֶךָ, “according to the word of the glory of your name” is a motivation for help from God (79:9), and “but to your name give glory,” כִּי־לְשִׁמְךָ תֵּן כְּבוֹד (115:1). The concept also appears as לְשִׁכֹּן כְּבוֹד בְּאַרְצֵנוּ, “that glory may dwell in our land” (85:10). כְּבוֹדוֹ, “His glory,” finds its antecedent, LORD, in the preceding verse (96:3), is seen by all (97:6), is above the heavens (113:4), and when Zion is built, the LORD shall appear in בְּכְבוֹדוֹ, “his glory” (102:16). It is also evident in כְּבוֹד יְהוָה, “the glory of the LORD” or “the glory of Yahweh” (104:31; 138:5). Although it is generic, “they exchanged אֶת־כְּבוֹדָם, “their glory” “for an ox that eats grass” (106:20), it clearly refers to Yahweh. Lastly, it is found in phrases related to kingdom: “the glorious splendor of your majesty,” כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתֶךָ, הָרַר כְּבוֹד הוֹרֵךְ (145:5), “glory of your kingdom” (145:11), וּכְבוֹד הָרַר מַלְכוּתוֹ, “and the glory of the majesty of your kingdom” (145:12).

Recognizing that the LORD deserves glory, the people are commanded to ascribe כְּבוֹד, “glory,” among other qualities to the LORD (Ps 29:1-2; 96:7, 8). Verse 9 observes that everything in the temple, אָמַר כְּבוֹד, “says glory.” Asaph was assured that after his earthly life of being guided by the LORD’s counsel and hand, כְּבוֹד תִּקְחֵנִי, “you will take me to glory” (73:24). Since Asaph was always with the LORD (73:23), glory must be a place of the LORD’s abode after this life.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> This paper will concentrate on these verses in the Psalter: Psalm 3:4; 19:2; 24:7-10; 26:8; 29:1-2, 3, 9; 57:6, 12; 63:3; 66:2; 72:19; 73:24; 79:9; 85:10; 96:3; 97:6; 102:16f; 104:31; 106:20; 108: 6; 113:4; 115:1; 138:5; 145:5, 11-12. Although כְּבוֹד is used in 48 verses in Psalms (based on a BibleWorks7 search), it does not always refer to God. For instance, Psalm 4:3 refers to David’s glory, כְּבוֹד.

## *Identifying “Glory’s” Placement in Individual Books of the Psalms*

There seems to be fairly even distribution of the concept of the “glory of God” across the Psalter.

|                     |                               |          |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|----------|
| Book 1 (Ps 1-41)    | Pss 3, 19, 24, 26 and 29      | 5 Psalms |
| Book 2 (Ps 42-72)   | Pss 57, 63, 66 and 72         | 4 Psalms |
| Book 3 (Ps 73-89)   | Pss 73, 79, and 85            | 3 Psalms |
| Book 4 (Ps 90-106)  | Pss 96, 97, 102, 104 and 106  | 5 Psalms |
| Book 5 (Ps 107-150) | Pss 108, 113, 115, 138, & 145 | 5 Psalms |

### “Glory” in Book 1

In this psalm of lament (Ps 3:4) David identifies Yahweh as כְּבוֹדִי, “my glory.” Ross observes, “This word, (כְּבוֹד; s.v. Ps 19:1) is commonly used to describe God as the most important person in existence.”<sup>6</sup> Unlike the metaphor “you are a shield about me,” כְּבוֹדִי, “my glory,” is a poetic intensification of the one who not only protects him by being his shield but is David’s “most important person in existence” since he is the lone one whom David is trusting to deliver him from his adversaries.<sup>7</sup> כְּבוֹדִי, “my glory,” is a direct reference to the LORD himself.

The next reference is the classic divine revelation text of Psalm 19:

הַשָּׁמַיִם מְסַפְּרִים כְּבוֹד־אֱלֹהִים  
וּמַעֲשֵׂהָ יְדֵי מַגִּיד הַרְקִיעַ

The heavens declare the glory of God,  
And the works of his hands proclaim the firmament.

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<sup>6</sup> Allen Ross, *A Commentary on Psalms 1-41* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2012), 222. Ross continues to suggest that glory here may refer to the glory God gave David as king. This seems a stretch since “my glory” in the second colon is parallel to the second person independent pronoun and Yahweh in the first.

<sup>7</sup> The “but you are” in 4a is an ellipsis in 4b to add הַמַּלְאָכִים רִאשֵׁי “and the one who lifts my head.”

Based on the parallelism of these lines<sup>8</sup> it is apparent that the glory of God are the created works of God's hands that David observed as he contemplated the majesty of the universe. Whether it is day or night, all the crafted elements of the heavens are evidences of the glory of God (i.e., the works of the divine creator). Just like the sun that shines on all and none can escape its heat (19:7), none can escape living under the bright proofs of the glory of God.

The third appearance of the divine glory is Psalm 24. In this praise poem there are five occurrences. Each is identical: מֶלֶךְ הַקְּבוֹד, "king of glory." (24:7, 8, 9, 10a, 10c). Since the LORD is creator and owner of the entire earth, it reasons that he is the earth's and Israel's rightful king. As Israel's king he is the one who leads his people in victorious battle against his enemies (24:8). The twice repeated rhetorical question, מֶלֶךְ הַקְּבוֹד מִי זֶה, "who is this, the king of glory?" (vs 8, 10), is not seeking to ascertain his identity but functions as a self-evident exclamation. The first rhetorical question, "Who is this, the king of glory?" calls for response: "He is the LORD strong and mighty, The LORD strong in battle" (8). The reply to the second rhetorical question, מִי הוּא זֶה מֶלֶךְ הַקְּבוֹד, "who is he, this king of glory?", is intensified by the fronting of his identity in the line, "Yahweh of hosts, he is the king of glory," מֶלֶךְ הַקְּבוֹד הוּא יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת הוּא. For those who had witnessed Israel's victory over her enemies, they would have realized that their success in battle was because of Yahweh, the king of glory.

The fourth appearance of the glory of God occurs in Psalm 26:8:

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<sup>8</sup> I am employing a combination of Kugel's and Alter's understanding of parallelism. Kugel understood parallelism as "A line, what's more B line." Alter saw an intensification from line A to line B. So to read this full line poetically: "The heavens declare the glory of God (what's more or what is specified) "And the works of his hands proclaim the firmament."

יְהוָה אֶהְבֵּתִי מֵעוֹן בֵּיתְךָ  
וּמְקוֹמָם מִשְׁכַּן כְּבוֹדְךָ

Yahweh, I love the habitation of your house  
And the dwelling place of your glory.

Although the genitive of the second line is unidentified specifically *וּמְקוֹמָם מִשְׁכַּן כְּבוֹדְךָ*, from the parallelism of the previous line it is clear that the dwelling place of *כְּבוֹדְךָ*, “your glory,” is certainly the sanctuary where God had chosen to localize his presence among his people, Israel. This residence was special for David because he loved to be with God. Dwelling in the company of God’s glory meant he enjoyed God’s localized presence and was not in the assembly of the wicked (26:4-5). It was not the material of the tabernacle that made it a desirable place to dwell for David. The parallelism of the lines indicates that what made this “house” special was because “your glory” had chosen there to dwell.<sup>9</sup> It is as Ross comments, “The evidence of the divine presence dwelling there (that) made it a glorious place.”<sup>10</sup>

The fifth psalm referring to the “glory of God” appears is Psalm 29. In this song the concept appears in three distinct manners. The first (vss 1b-2a) is a twofold imperative for the people:

הִבְּיָהוּ לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד וְעֹז  
הִבְּיָהוּ לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד שְׁמוֹ

Ascribe to Yahweh glory and strength.  
Ascribe to Yahweh glory to his name.

The four lines of verses 1 and 2 are probably a tetra-colon that describe: the recipient and actors (1a); what elements are ascribed to Yahweh (1b); the reason for ascribing glory to

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<sup>9</sup> Note the specification and intensification from “your house” in 8a to “your glory” in 8b and the parallel placement of both noun phrases at the end of each line.

<sup>10</sup> Ross, *Psalms 1-41*, 616.

Yahweh (2a); and the result of these three lines comes back to the characters in the first line (2b), Yahweh and the “sons of God.” These “sons of God” are to worship Yahweh in holiness.<sup>11</sup> As Ross observes, “Proclaim the glory and strength of God in praise, i.e. give God the credit he deserves.”<sup>12</sup>

The second occurrence in this psalm is 29:3:

קוֹל יְהוָה עַל-הַמַּיִם  
אֱלֹהֵי-הַכְבוֹד הַרְעִים  
יְהוָה עַל-מַיִם רַבִּים

The voice of Yahweh is over the waters  
God of glory thunders  
Yahweh is over the many waters.

This praise psalm focuses on קוֹל יְהוָה, “the voice of Yahweh.” In the introductory tri-colon it is clear that “the God of glory” is Yahweh and it is his majestic and powerful voice that is evidenced over “many waters.” In an exhibition of great power (i.e., a thunder and lightning storm vs 4-9), the God of glory is to be given glory. This awesome exhibit of the power of God over and through nature “actually displays his glory.”<sup>13</sup>

The third occasion of the divine כְּבוֹד is in the last line of the tri-colon of verse 9:

וּבְהִיכָלָו כָּלוּ אָמַר כְּבוֹד

And in his temple everyone says, “Glory.”

Since this psalm reveals God’s glory through his control and power over all of nature even outside of Israel (vv 5-6), it does not seem to reference the temple or tabernacle. With the mention

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<sup>11</sup> Lines 1b and 2a may be the chiasmic middle of this tetra-colon, which centers on glory.

<sup>12</sup> Ross, *Psalms 1-41*, 655.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

of Yahweh sitting as king over Noah's flood,<sup>14</sup> "his temple" seems to signify Yahweh's heavenly abode.<sup>15</sup> Thus, all the beings that inhabit "his temple" naturally are obligated to give glory to God.

## "Glory" in Book 2

In Book 2, four psalms refer to the divine glory. The first is the individual lament of Psalm 57. It is a twice-repeated refrain (vv 6, 12):

רוּמָה עַל-הַשָּׁמַיִם אֱלֹהִים  
עַל כָּל-הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדְךָ

Be exalted over the heavens, O God,  
Over all the earth your glory.

This confident request is sandwiched almost inexplicably between two of David's desperate complaints (vv 4 and 6). Being literally surrounded by his foes, David implores God to allow his glory (i.e., his divine power to deliver him) to be evident to all. Exactly what David had in mind in this demonstration of power is uncertain. However, it seems to be meant as a motivation; once his enemies had seen such power, they would cease their attack. Tate comments, "The prayer expresses the desire for a saving manifestation of glory and power of the divine presence in the heavens and over the earth."<sup>16</sup>

The second refrain functions simultaneously as a conclusion to the last stanza and the entire psalm (v 12). Here the prayer seems to be a response to the divine *hesed*, אֱמֶת, "faithfulness," as demonstrated in David's life. In the first refrain "your glory" is unspecified. However, in this concluding verse it may be that the poetic heightening of God's *hesed* to the heavens and his faithfulness to the clouds points to the defining and displaying of "your glory." God's glory is seen over all the earth

<sup>14</sup> *BDB*, 550.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 421.

<sup>16</sup> Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, WBC 20 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 79.

as Israel recognizes God's great hesed and faithfulness in the midst of their own personal suffering at the hands of their enemies. Here כְּבוֹדְךָ, "your glory," is equivalent to הִפְדֶּיךָ, "your hesed," and אֱמֻנתְךָ, "your faithfulness."

The second occurrence in Book 2 is Psalm 63:3. Although Psalm 63 is a psalm of confidence, verse 1 begins in a minor key. David seems to be in a desperate spiritual situation where he yearns for God's intervention in his life. David describes his soul's situation in a picturesque metaphor of a desert traveler longing for water in a land where there is none.

However, this had not always been the case for David's soul. There were times when God had been very present in his life:

כֵּן בְּקֹדֶשׁ חֲזִיתִיךָ  
לְרֵאוֹת עֲזֶיךָ וְכְבוֹדְךָ

Thus in the sanctuary I have beheld you,  
To see your strength and your glory.

In the past when David had been in the sanctuary, he was able to see evidence of God by seeing evidences of his strength and glory manifested in some unspecified way.<sup>17</sup> David's soul longs for a repeat of this experience.

In this psalm there is no direct indication what "your glory" actually is. While it is paired with "your strength," it cannot be the same thing as strength. Although hesed has been paired directly with glory in the previous psalm, there is no apparent linkage with its use in verse 3. From this verse alone "your glory" is a manifestation of God himself to David through an experience of his strength and glory while in the sanctuary.

The third occurrence for Book 2 is the anonymous Psalm 66. The first stanza begins with a fourfold command for Israel to praise God. In the second command Israel is told to

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<sup>17</sup> Recognizing "A line, what's more B line" shows that David is not looking for a physical manifestation of God but a demonstration of God in his might and glory.

זָמְרוּ כְבוֹד־שְׁמוֹ  
שִׁימוּ כְבוֹד תְּהִלָּתוֹ

2a Sing the glory of his name

2b Set glory on his praise.

In this psalm verses 1 and 2 may function as a tri-colon and with “God” in the previous line (66:1). When an Israelite sang the “glory of his name,” he was telling of the awesome works of God himself. In this psalm his works included the drying of the sea at the Exodus (v 6), his rule over the nations (v 7), his keeping of his people (9), his refining (vv 10-12), and his answered prayer (vv 16-20). All these divine events motivated a call to praise for this psalmist and reveal the glory of his name in God’s actions on Israel’s behalf.

The fourth occurrence of divine glory in Book 2 is Psalm 72:19. In this last stated psalm of David, God and his works are once again linked to “his glorious name”:

וּבְרִיךְ שֵׁם כְבוֹדוֹ לְעוֹלָם  
וַיִּמְלֵא כְבוֹדוֹ אֶת־כָּל הָאָרֶץ  
אָמֵן וְאָמֵן

Blessed be his glorious name forever  
And be filled with his glory the whole earth  
Amen, amen.

Verse 20 expresses the desire that Yahweh’s name (i.e., his character and actions on behalf of Israel) be spoken of well and that the whole earth be filled with כְבוֹדוֹ. The reason for this blessing is because God has installed his righteous king in the land and there is peace and fertility (vs 1-17). With God’s king reigning over all nations (vv 8-11), כְבוֹדוֹ would be seen in his righteous actions of ruling all and its attendant blessings for all. This request for the whole earth to be filled with his glory concludes the psalm collection of David and the second book of the psalter.

### “Glory” in Book 3

Three psalms reference the glory of God in this book. The first is a wisdom psalm (Ps 73). In this poem Asaph contrasts the life and death of the righteous and wicked. For the wicked they are destined for destruction and to be despised by Yahweh (vv 18-20). For the righteous they are assured of God's presence as he grasps their right hand (v 23) and guides them (v 24a) and יִצְחָקוּ אַחֲרַי וְאֶחָדָם אֶתְּקַבֵּל, “and afterward receive me to glory.” While there is much discussion as to what is glory in this verse, there is no reason not to see glory as God's abode in heaven where Asaph is certain he will be after death. Since Asaph states he is always with Yahweh (v 23a) and his guidance (v 24a) on this earth, then “afterwards” must refer to a time after his dwelling on this globe. Since this psalm contrasts the life and final destination of the wicked and righteous, seeing glory as heaven, the final destination for the righteous, has contextual support. It makes sense that heaven would be a place of glory since there is glory wherever God localizes his presence.

The second psalm that speaks of glory is a communal lament by Asaph. In this psalm the poet makes his request for deliverance from foreign enemies and forgiveness of sin, which brought on an invasion (79:9):

עַל־דְּבַר כְּבוֹד־שִׁמְךָ

According to the word of the glory of your name.

God's glory is at stake because his people, Israel, and his temple have been invaded. Although the people are suffering greatly, it is God's glory and his character that had been injured as well (v 10). Asaph appeals to God based on “the word of the glory of your name” to intervene for his desperate people. For God to deliver and forgive his wayward people of their sin that caused such misery and death and to repay the nations is to reveal to the world God's glory (cf. Prov 25:2).

The final psalm that references “glory” in Book 3 is one from the sons of Korah (85:10). Like the previous psalm of Asaph, the setting seems to be the aftermath of captivity and exile. Although not a request as in the previous psalm, the confident statement of

God’s rescue being near to those who fear him (v 10a) echoes a similar situation: this downtrodden people are in desperate need for God’s deliverance as expressed in his forgiveness of their transgression that caused such a great calamity. If the people fear God (v 10a) and not turn back to their folly (v 9), then he would once again be pleased to dwell among his people in their land:

לִשְׁבֹן כְּבוֹד בְּאַרְצֵנוּ

In order for glory to dwell in our land

The lamed preposition on the infinitive construct, לִשְׁבֹן, (v 9b) offers the motivation for the previous line. The introductory “surely,” אַךְ, of 9a makes forgiveness and God’s dwelling (i.e., his glory) in the land with his people, a divine but conditional promise (i.e., if his people will fear him).

### “Glory” in Book 4

The first psalm in Book 4 that speaks of “glory” is Psalm 96. In this anonymous psalm of praise Israel is to act as the international evangelist:

סִפְרוּ בְּגוֹיִם כְּבוֹדוֹ  
בְּכָל־הָעַמִּים נִפְלְאוֹתָיו

Rehearse for the nations his glory

For all the peoples his extraordinary deeds (96:3)

The parallelism between these lines points to נִפְלְאוֹתָיו, “his extraordinary *deeds*” being a specification of כְּבוֹדוֹ, “his glory.” Based on the context his extraordinary deeds seem to refer to the salvation mentioned in the previous verse (2). Thus God’s glory is evident as his people share with others his deliverance on their behalf.

Once the nations are told of these marvelous divine deeds the psalmist implores the peoples to

הָבֹהַ לַיהוָה מִשְׁפָּחוֹת עַמִּים  
הָבֹהַ לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד וְעֹז  
הָבֹהַ לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד שְׁמוֹ

Ascribe to Yahweh families of the peoples  
Ascribe to Yahweh glory and strength  
Ascribe to Yahweh glory *to* his name

In a possible echo of Psalm 29 but with a broader audience of “families of the peoples,” this tri-colon builds to the climax of giving Yahweh’s name glory. The reason for this praise of his name (his nature, character, and actions) is due to his present reign, the stability of the earth under his reign and his coming equity judgment of all peoples (v 10).

The second “psalm of glory” (97) is written in the shadow of Psalm 96. Just as that psalm concludes with the anticipation of Yahweh’s coming to judge, Psalm 97 paints a vivid picture of the divine presence approaching the earth to judge (vv 2-5). This dramatic scene causes the psalmist to declare,

הַגִּידוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם צְדָקָו  
וּרְאוּ כָּל־הָעַמִּים כְּבוֹדוֹ

The heavens declare his righteousness  
And all the peoples see his glory (97:6)

In isolation this verse seems to be an echo of Psalm 19. However, based on the theophany of verses 2-4 what the heavens declare and all peoples perceive is Yahweh’s glorious appearing. Because he is righteous and glorious, idol worshippers should be ashamed (v 7). However, the righteous will rejoice in his divine judgments and reign over all (vv 8-9).

Ross observes that glory may refer to “the brilliant aspect of nature that surrounds God’s presence, attesting to his importance; but more specifically it refers to his intrinsic nature as the most important person ever.”<sup>18</sup> Glory should not be limited to either/or.

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<sup>18</sup> Allen Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms: 90-150*, Kregel Exegetical Library (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic), 155.

In this psalm God’s glory refers to his presence (vv 2-4), his nature (vv 4b-6; 9, 12) and his actions (v 10b, c).

The third psalm in Book 4 is the individual lament of Psalm 102. The setting of this psalm seems to be the exile where the nation of Israel (v 14) and her people suffer under the wrath of God (vv 10-11). In his request the psalmist desires that God demonstrate compassion on Zion (v 13) by rebuilding her (v 16). The physical restoration of the city would cause the nations to fear Yahweh’s name.

In response to Yahweh’s rebuilding Zion,

וְכָל־מַלְכֵי הָאָרֶץ אֶת־כְּבוֹדְךָ

And all the kings of the earth your glory (16).<sup>19</sup>

While “your glory” is parallel to “the name of the LORD,” it is not until the next verse that we discover the kings’ motivation to fear the divine glory (v 17):

נִרְאָה בְּכְבוֹדוֹ

He, himself, will appear in his glory

The reason for fear is not only God’s rebuilding of his city but his personal appearance and subsequent habitation in her. There is coming a day when all the kings of the earth will see Yahweh in his glory in his holy city.

The fourth psalm of glory in Book 4 is a hymn of praise for God’s creation (Ps 104). After rehearsing in elevated detail God’s magnificent act of creation, the poet expresses his heart’s desire:

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<sup>19</sup> The verb יָרָא to fear, in the first line (16a) has probably been dropped due to the psalmist’s use of ellipsis in the second line (16b) in order to add “kings of the earth.”

יְהִי כְבוֹד יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם  
 וְשִׂמְחַת יְהוָה בְּמַעֲשָׂיו

Let the glory of Yahweh endure forever  
 Let Yahweh rejoice in his works.

For the psalmist, God's creation of all, his sustaining of every aspect of creation, and his reign over all its members moves the poet to recognize that these all point to God's glory. Since his glory is so evident, the psalmist prays that this display of glory endures forever. Allen remarks, "He expresses a hope that his glorious power will never cease to be revealed in the natural world."<sup>20</sup> With this ever-present evidence of the divine glory all men should recognize God's greatness and bless him (104:31).

The last occurrence of glory in Book 4 appears in the final psalm. Psalm 106 is a historical review of Israel's rebellion and God's deliverance of his people. In the midst of rehearsing Israel's checkered past, the psalmist reminds his readers of that wretched time when Israel "made a calf in Horeb and worshipped a molten image" (106:20):

וַיִּמְרוּ אֶת־כְּבוֹדָם  
 בַּחֲבִנִית שׂוֹר אֲכָל עֵשֶׂב

And exchanged their glory  
 For an image of an ox that eats grass.

While "their glory" is unidentified specifically in this verse, it is certain that God was their glory as evident by his great power and kindness to save them from Egypt (vv 6-12). When the people forgot these divine works of deliverance (v 13), they also forgot God, their savior, who wrought them (v 21). It was he who did great works on their behalf (vv 21b-22). However, the people craved a physical manifestation of God. The image they chose lacked divine glory since it was a construct of their own hands

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<sup>20</sup> Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, WBC 21 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), 34.

and dependent on God himself for its food.<sup>21</sup> It neither contained nor displayed any glory in itself.

### “Glory” in Book 5

The last book in the psalter contains five chapters that are associated with the divine glory. In a return to a psalm of David, Psalm 108:6 is a near repetition of Psalm 57:6. However, Psalm 57 is a lament because of his enemies, and Psalm 108 a song of praise because of God’s expected victory over them:

רוּמָה עַל־שָׁמַיִם אֱלֹהִים  
וְעַל כָּל־הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדְךָ

Be exalted over the heavens, O, God  
And over all the earth your glory.

The placement of “God” and “your glory” in the last position of their respective lines points to the identification of “your glory” as God himself. The use of the merism “over the heavens” and “over the earth” shows that David desires God’s presence be recognized to all because of his *hesed* and truth (v 5). However, this demonstration of God in his glory will be specifically evident when David (his beloved) is delivered (v 7). God’s glory is manifested when he works on behalf of his beloved.

The second occurrence is the first of the *Hallel* psalms, a descriptive hymn of praise, Psalm 113. Verse 4 rehearses in a similar manner כְּבוֹדְךָ, “his glory,” to a previous psalm (v 108). However, this time it is a statement of fact and not a request:

רָם עַל־כָּל־גּוֹיִם יְהוָה  
עַל הַשָּׁמַיִם כְּבוֹדְךָ

Exalted over the nations is Yahweh  
Over the heavens his glory.

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<sup>21</sup> Ross, *Psalms 90-150*, 288.

David's request for God's glory to be exalted over the heavens in Psalm 108 becomes a reality in this psalm. This exaltation seems to be the basis for the threefold "praise" commands of verses 1-3. This ending praise is due to his glory being over not just the nations of this earth but over the highest heavens he created. Ross explains,

The word 'glory' (s.v. Ps. 19:1) in this passage means all the supernatural manifestations of his presence. He who sits enthroned in the highest heavens is surrounded by brilliant and radiant light and all of it means that there is no one more important than he, no one more honorable, no one more powerful.<sup>22</sup>

This exalted position of Yahweh introduces the rhetorical question that expects a negative answer in verse 5:

מי כִּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ  
הַמְגִבִּיהִי לְשָׁבַח

Who is like Yahweh, our God  
He who sits exalted?

The glory of Yahweh is manifested in his exalted position above all nations. What is more, his person is recognized in his lofty position above the heavens and all its inhabitants, both natural and supernatural.

The third reference to "glory" in Book 5 appears in the opening of Psalm 115:

לֹא לָנוּ יְהוָה לֹא לָנוּ  
כִּי-לְשִׁמְךָ תֵּן כְּבוֹד  
עַל-חֲסִדֶּךָ עַל-אֱמֻנָתְךָ

Not to us, Yahweh, not to us  
But to your name give glory  
On account of your *hesed* and your faithfulness

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 392.

It appears the psalmist is concerned that Israel would be given glory if God were to answer their complaint (v 2). The singer protests strongly and declares with the adversative וְ, that glory belongs to Yahweh and not Israel. The foundation of Yahweh’s name receiving glory is because of “your hesed and your faithfulness.” Yahweh’s hesed and faithfulness would again be evident once God manifested himself to the nations by blessing his people (vv 12-15).

God’s actions on behalf of his people cause them and presumably the nations (v 2) to give his name glory (i.e., to give him the credit). Yahweh’s glory is demonstrated as he acts on behalf of his people.

The fourth incidence of divine glory in Book 5 is a psalm of thanksgiving by David. In this poem כְּבוֹד יְהוָה, “glory of Yahweh,” will be recognized by “all the kings of the earth” sometime in the future (v 4). By hearing the words of Yahweh (v 4), they will be moved to “sing of the ways of Yahweh” (v 5). These “pagan” kings offer praise to God because the ways of Yahweh which manifest his glory:

וַיִּשְׁירוּ בְּדַרְכֵי יְהוָה  
כִּי גָדוֹל כְּבוֹד יְהוָה

They will sing of the ways of Yahweh  
Because great is the glory of Yahweh

The structure of these lines clearly matches “the ways of Yahweh” with “the glory of Yahweh” across the two lines. The parallelism reveals the specification that “the glory of Yahweh” is revealed to all the kings of the earth when they recognize “the ways of Yahweh.”

Although one may be tempted to surmise (outside the psalm’s context) what “ways of Yahweh” these kings will praise, the וַי of the next verse explicitly identifies his ways:

כִּי־רָם יְהוָה  
 וְשַׁפֵּל יִרְאֶה  
 וְנִבְהַ מִּמְרָחֵק יִדְעַ

Though Yahweh is exalted  
 Yet the lowly he sees  
 But the haughty from a distance he knows

While Yahweh certainly sees all who are humble, contextually the “lowly” probably refers to David (vv 2, 7). It seems the kings will praise Yahweh as they see him who is so highly exalted deliver such a lowly one as David. At the same time they see Yahweh ignoring the proud (v 6c). In this case God’s specific acts on David’s behalf (and against the haughty) are manifestations of his glory.

The fifth and final occurrence of glory in Book 5 is the last of the David psalms in the psalter. This poem of praise contains three references to glory (145:5, 11-12):

תָּרַר כְּבוֹד הַדָּבָר  
 וְדַבַּרְי נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ אֲשִׁיחָה

The splendor of the glory of your majesty.  
 And your extraordinary ways I will enthusiastically  
 proclaim<sup>23</sup>

Based on parallelism both of structure and meaning, “the splendor of the glory of your majesty,” is displayed in “your extraordinary ways.” Contextually these “ways” are defined as “your works,” “mighty acts” (v 4), “power of your awesome acts,” the evidence of his “gracious and merciful” character as demonstrated in his hesed and goodness to all (vv 8, 14-20) and his enduring kingdom (vv 12-13).

The last two references are combined in a possible tetra-  
 colon of verses 11-12:

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<sup>23</sup> HALOT 2:1320. שִׁיחַ is defined as “loud, enthusiastic, emotionally laden speech.” BDB suggests “muse, complain or talk of” for שִׁיחַ (867).

כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתְךָ יִאֲמְרוּ  
וְגִבּוֹרָתְךָ יִדְבְּרוּ:  
לְהוֹדִיעַ לְבָנֵי הָאָדָם גְּבוּרָתְךָ  
וְכְבוֹד הַדָּר מַלְכוּתְךָ:

11a The glory of your kingdom they will say

11b And your strength they will speak

12a To make known to the sons of man his strength

12b And the glory of the splendor of your kingdom

In some ways the “the glory of your kingdom” is exhibited by “your strength.” However, is this manifestation of strength demonstrated in establishing the kingdom, maintaining the kingdom, his rule in the kingdom, or its endurance through the ages or some other aspect of the kingdom? Although readers may not know “the what,” the manner in which the godly ones will bless Yahweh is by their “telling” of the strength and glory of his kingdom (v 12).<sup>24</sup>

### *Israel's Relationship with the Divine Glory*

#### **Book 1**

Israel's relationship with the divine glory is a personal one as evidenced by David's use of the first person pronoun כְּבוֹדִי, “my glory.” Although others were denying God's activity in his life (3:3), David clung to his glory (i.e., God) as the only person for his defense and deliverance. This divine glory is not only personal but also universal. All who view the created order had an opportunity to comprehend the divine glory on magnificent display (Ps 19). This glory is personal, universal, and national. As creator and owner of the entire earth and all that it contains, Yahweh is both the earth's and Israel's rightful king. As such, he is the one who leads his people in victorious battle against his enemies (24:8). When Yahweh was not securing Israel's

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<sup>24</sup> Strength and glory of Yahweh's kingdom is exhibited at least in its enduring through all times (145:13) and his righteous care for his subjects (145:14-20).

victories, he localized his presence among Israel in the sanctuary (26:8). Within the processes of nature, God's glory is exhibited in the thunder and lightning storm (29:3). Based on such intimate and obvious displays of the divine glory, Israel was invited to ascribe to Yahweh glory (29:1-2), that is, give him credit for all of these demonstrations of his glory because the rest of creation already does (Ps 29:9).

## **Book 2**

On the personal level David once again appeals to the demonstration of the divine glory in delivering him from his enemies. However, unlike Psalm 3 David desires that all the earth would see the divine glory on display through his hesed and faithfulness through delivering him (Ps 57: 6, 12). On the national level God's glory is displayed once again at the sanctuary (63:3) and through his works on behalf of and through the nation of Israel (Ps 66). On the international scene with God's king reigning over all nations (72:8-11), his glory, כבודו, would be seen over all the earth.

## **Book 3**

In Book 3, glory for Asaph is a destination with Yahweh after his life on earth is completed (Ps 73:24). Glory is also displayed as God forgives his people and deals with Israel's enemies (79:9). In Psalm 85 the sons of Korah recognize that the divine glory will once again dwell in the land among his people if the people will fear God and turn from folly (85:9-10). With the exile as the background for their circumstances in the last two of these "glory" psalms, the divine glory is exhibited during his people's desperate times.

## **Book 4**

Book 4 opens with the command for Israel to be the evangelist by ascribing glory of God's extraordinary deeds on behalf of Israel to all the nations (96:3). These accomplishments seem to refer to his reign. Psalm 97 speaks of his glory exhibited

to all to see his personal coming and judgment. The next psalm maintains the international audience as they perceive God's rebuilding of Jerusalem and his presence in his holy city (102:16). The creation psalm (104) offers the wish that the glory of Yahweh as exhibited in his created order should be forever (104:1). Psalm 106 rehearses the exact starting place for Israel's captivity, her idolatry and exchange of her glory for another of much less glory (106:20).

## **Book 5**

A psalm of David expresses the desire for all "your glory" to be exhibited over the heavens (108:7). Psalm 113 takes the jussive of the previous psalm and makes it a declarative: there is none like Yahweh (113:4). In the third glory psalm God's actions on behalf of his people cause them and presumably the nations (115:2) to glorify his name. Yahweh's glory is revealed as he acts on behalf of his people. In Psalm 138 "pagan" kings offer praise to God because Yahweh's ways to Israel manifest his glory (138:4). The strength and glory of Yahweh's kingdom is proclaimed by his godly ones (145).

### ***Glory of God through the Book of Psalms***

There has been no compositional theory of the Psalms as a whole that has won the scholarly day. Outside the recognition of chapters 1 and 2 playing the introduction for the book of Psalms and chapters 145-150 the conclusion, the purpose and flow of its composition are still up for debate. So the observations concerning glory in this section are few and tentative. I offer those that seem most evident.

(1) Many, but not all the psalms that reference glory were written by David. Only Book 3 evidences no glory references by him and this same Book notes the least number of occurrences.

If Book 3 concerns the “Assyrian Crisis”<sup>25</sup> or “Devastation”<sup>26</sup> of Israel in general, this makes sense.

(2) Although God's glory is certainly evident to all, the international audience seems to become more pronounced towards and in Book 5.

(3) The sanctuary is recognized as a place of glory in Books 1 and 2. However in Book 3 the future hope of God's glory dwelling is in the land without reference to the sanctuary. Book 4 reiterates the hope of the glory dwelling in a rebuilt Jerusalem without mention of a sanctuary and Book 5 has no specific mention of the sanctuary or city, only a kingdom.

(4) Although the glory of the kingdom is not absent from earlier books, (God's rule through his king is seen in Book 2 [Ps 72]), it is explicit in Book 5 (Ps 145). If there is any type of progressive historical threads in the book of Psalms, having an explicit mention of the kingdom and its universal reach in the final book seems natural.

(5) The glory of God is evident in lament psalms as well as praise. There is a movement away from the employment of the lament genre as one moves to Book 5 and the kingdom.

(6) Although God's glory is present in his personal manifestation in Book 1 and 2, it disappears in Book 3 and is a future hope in Book 4 and 5.

(7) The glory of God in Psalms gives evidence that Ryrie is certainly correct that “salvation, for all its wonder, is but one facet of the multifaceted diamond of the glory of God.”<sup>27</sup> Only one psalm that references “glory” mentions Israel's redemption at the exodus event (Ps 106) and glory does not refer to the salvific aspect of the event.

(8) Although God's glory is certainly seen in his creation, Israel is the central focus where the divine glory is manifested to the world. Without an Israel, God's glory lacks a stage on which to shine.

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<sup>25</sup> Gerald Wilson as cited by Paul House, *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1998), 405.

<sup>26</sup> O. Palmer Robertson, *The Flow of the Psalms: Discovering their Structure and Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2015), 52.

<sup>27</sup> Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, 94.

### ***Israel's Relationship with the Glory of God***

As a microcosm of the OT we can extrapolate that the Psalms demonstrate that God could be an individual Israelite's glory and Israel was always in the presence of God's glory at the sanctuary where he localized his presence in the land and as he joined them in battle against their enemies. They enjoyed his glory under his creation that displayed that glory and were recipients of his works on their behalf that exhibited his glory. There is a coming future when all Israel will live, work, and play under the glorious reign of his kingdom from Jerusalem.

From these psalms God's glory is displayed in his person, his presence, his creation, his works on behalf of Israel (especially his *hesed* and faithfulness), and his reign. As a good evangelist, Israel is to share this knowledge and experience with others, as they themselves recognize and credit him for his person, presence, creation, work, and reign. All the nations that hear and believe Israel's testimony will join her in giving Yahweh the glory due his name. In one sense God's glory is incomplete without his relationship to his people, Israel forever.