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'I AM POOR AND NEEDY': THE WORSHIPPER'S POSTURE WITHIN THE PSALTER'S STRUCTURE

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ABSTRACT: This study builds upon Johannes Bremer's thesis that the main theme of the Psalter is YHWH's concern for the poor (the so-called *Armentheologie* or theology of the poor). I argue that the phrase 'poor and needy' does not occur randomly through the Psalter but at strategic junctures. Traced from its inception to conclusion, seven Psalms (35, 37, 40, 70, 74, 86, 109) utilize this phrase to create a trajectory that moves from suffering to triumph, from oppression to deliverance, from denigration to vindication. Along this plotline, the psalmist identifies himself with the poor and needy in a way that grounds a messianic horizon for the Psalter, foreshadowing its consummation in Jesus Christ, the ultimate royal sage who promises 'blessing' (*ashre*) for the 'poor in spirit' who inherit the heavenly kingdom alongside the Psalter's poor petitioner (Psalm 72:8-14; Matthew 3:2; Luke 6:20). The Psalter thus provides hope in the midst of suffering, as the poor and needy praise God's name after deliverance and thank him for his abundant steadfast love, culminating in God's ultimate victory through their (eschatological) deliverance.

KEYWORDS: Psalms, Psalter, 'poor and needy', David, canonical

Introduction

The Psalter has provided a rich repository for worship and theological reflection among Jews and Christians since its composition. The New Testament authors cite the Psalms more than any other Old Testament book (Wenham 2012: 19). Martin Luther famously called the Psalter 'a little Bible' (Luther 1960: 35:256), while John Calvin considered it "an anatomy of all parts of the soul," for its reflection of every emotion a believer can experience (Calvin 1965: 1:16). Alongside its extensive use by believers throughout the past millennia, however, debates persist as to how best to approach the Psalter and how to understand and appropriate its material.

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The twentieth century gave rise to two paradigm shifts in Psalms studies with implications for the study of the Psalter (see Prinsloo 2021). Hermann Gunkel's *Die Psalmen* (1926) introduced the form-critical or genre approach, with the psalms understood as individual songs arising from the cultic life-setting of ancient Israel. Gunkel delineated a number of psalm-types, including broader categories such as hymns, communal laments, and individual laments, as well as more specific categories such as victory songs and pilgrimage songs (Gunkel 1926: ix-x; Gunkel and Begrich 1985: 3; cf. Gunkel and Begrich 1998). Gunkel remained doubtful, however, that any larger scheme could be discerned for the placement of individual psalms within the Psalter (Gunkel and Begrich 1998: 2-3). Gunkel's approach would shape many scholars who followed him. Erich Zenger would thus note that by 1969 Frank Crüsemann's dissertation on the Psalms began with the assessment that Gunkel's approach 'had rendered all previous attempts to structure the Psalter so as to arrive at a proper understanding of the individual parts obsolete and invalid' (Zenger 2010: 17, author's translation) (for the impact of Gunkel's approach see Mowinckel 1992; Weiser 1959; Kraus 1993a; Kraus 1993b; Gerstenberger 1988; Seybold 1996; Gerstenberger 2001; Goldingay 2006; Goldingay 2007; Goldingay 2008). To discover patterns within the Psalter, interpreters would concentrate on grouping together compatible psalm types, discerning the form-critical categories for which Gunkel had set the agenda (Gunkel and Begrich 1985: 382).

The second shift came with Gerald Wilson's *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (1985). Wilson focused on the final form or canonical shape of the Psalter, arguing for 'purposeful, editorial organization' (Wilson 1985: 4). Wilson contended that the Psalter's final arrangement echoed Israel's historical relationship to God, moving from prayer to praise, from Israel to the nations, and from David's earthly kingship to YHWH's universal reign (Wilson 1985: 199-228). Wilson's proposed structure concentrated on the so-called seam psalms that open and close the five books of the Psalter, with Book IV as the 'editorial center' of the Psalter (Wilson 1985: 215). He concluded that the Psalter's final compilers sought to bolster the collapse of the Davidic hope in Books I-III by focusing on Israel's true hope— YHWH's kingship—in Books IV-V (Wilson 1985: 139-40).

Within the twenty-first century much of scholarly work on the Psalter has proceeded within Wilson's basic framework, as augmented and developed especially by German Roman Catholic scholars Erich Zenger (1939-2010) and Frank-Lothar Hossfeld (1942-2015) (Hossfeld and Zenger 1993-2012; Hossfeld and Zenger 2003; Zenger and Hossfeld 2016; Zenger 1991; Zenger 1998; Zenger 2001; Zenger 2010). Although much of their generative work in the Psalms took place in the 1990s, the effects of their scholarship has been felt more keenly in the English-speaking

world in the past two decades with the availability of their Hermeneia commentary and a few seminal articles in English. Many approaches to understanding and correlating the theology of the Psalter have followed their paradigm in accounting for not merely the exegesis of individual psalms but also the contours of each psalm's relationship to its context and ultimately to the entire Psalter. The theology of the Psalter takes shape, according to this approach, in line with its overall structure and perceived editorial strategy (see Dunham 2023).

Hossfeld thus argues, in a study with Till Steiner, that to discern the theology of the Psalter one must begin with analysis of its structure: 'To develop the theology of the Psalter based upon an understanding of this structure entails using the structure as an objective criterion which then controls the exegetical process' (Hossfeld and Steiner 2013: 243). Such an approach uses the 'shape' and 'shaping' of the Psalter as its twin controlling principles (Hossfeld and Steiner 2013: 242). Using Jerome's metaphor of the Psalter as 'a great house,' the authors argue that the structure of the Psalter—in its parts and holistically—plays a fundamental role in its proper understanding (Hossfeld and Steiner 2013: 241). This method begins with the individual psalm, then moves to the psalm grouping and book, and finally integrates these interpretive matrices within the Psalter as a whole (Hossfeld and Steiner 2013: 249):

> A diachronic and synchronic Psalter exegesis necessarily starts with the exegesis of a single psalm as the fundamental unit of the Psalter; it then puts that psalm in the context of its psalm grouping, its collection, its book within the Psalter and finally in the Psalter as a whole. To reach the long-term goal of a theology of the Psalter—one that presents the different theologies of the Psalter as found in its structure—it is necessary to disentangle the different threads, and these necessarily begin with an individual psalm.

Beat Weber builds on this approach, contending that the final step in the canonical Psalter program is a theological correlation of the entire Psalter. For Weber the end point of the Psalter's composition as canonical book is the starting point of its interpretation, providing an interpretive spiral by which the exegete moves from psalm to psalms grouping to Psalter and back again so as to understand the Psalter as a theological book and canonical text (Weber 2010: 743-44; cf. Weber 2014). By actualizing the Psalms in this way, the Psalter becomes God's Torah and its reader the blessed man (Weber 2006).

The Theology of the Poor in the Psalter

My own approach to the exegesis and theology of the Psalter builds on the work of Zenger and Hossfeld, while recognizing especially the contribution of Johannes

Bremer. Bremer concludes that the main thesis of the Psalter is YHWH's concern for the poor (the so-called *Armentheologie* or theology of the poor) (Bremer 2014; Bremer 2016; Bremer 2017). I investigate in the following the contours of psalms revolving around the poor followed by an identification of the poor in the Psalms. I argue that the phrase 'poor and needy' (עָנִי וְאֶבְיוֹן) (*'ānî wĕ'ebyôn*) does not occur randomly through the Psalter, but rather at strategic junctures within seven psalms (Psalms 35, 37, 40, 70, 74, 86, 109). These mentions trace a storyline for the poor and needy that moves from trial to triumph, from prayer to salvation, and from denigration to vindication. Along this plotline, the psalmist also identifies himself with the poor and needy in a way that grounds a messianic horizon for the Psalter as foreshadowing its consummation in Jesus Christ, the ultimate sage who promises 'blessing' (*ashre*) for the 'poor in spirit' who inherit the heavenly kingdom alongside the poor petitioner of the Psalms (Psalm 72:8-14; Matthew 3:2; Luke 6:20). I turn now to a broad look at the theology of the poor in the psalms and the criteria for discerning these elements.

The Criteria for Identifying the Theology of the Poor Psalms

Bremer bases his approach on structural devices and literary features spanning the five books of the Psalter. In its development of the theology of the poor, Bremer contends that the Psalter places David as its primary authority through the five Davidic collections (Psalms 3-41, 51-70, 101-103, 108-110, and 138-145) (Bremer 2016: 355). Within and beyond these collections, the Psalter's theology of the poor theme develops across forty of the Psalter's 150 psalms, twenty-five of which are Davidic psalms. Bremer identifies the following psalms as theology of the poor psalms: Psalms 4; 9/10; 12; 14; 18; 22; 24; 25; 31; 34; 35; 37; 40/41; 68; 69; 70; 72; 74; 76; 79; 82; 86; 102; 103; 107; 109; 112; 113; 116; 119; 132; 138; 140; 142; 143; 146; 147; 149 (Bremer 2016: 355n22).

To identify which psalms qualify as theology of the poor psalms, Bremer proposes three criteria. First, the psalm carries key terms for 'poor' or 'poverty' (e.g., *'ānî* ['poor,' 'afflicted']; *'ānāw* ['lowly']; *'ebyôn* ['needy']; *dal* ["weak"]; *roš* ['destitute']; *ḥalkâ* ['helpless']; and *dak* ['crushed,' 'oppressed']). Tucker expands the semantic domain of the poor to include *'ăšûqîm* ('oppressed'), *'almānâ* ('widow'), and *yātôm* ('orphan,' 'fatherless') (Bremer adds to the latter two the term *gēr* ['sojourner'] and designates them *personae miserae* [Bremer 2017: 101n2]). Tucker notes that these terms occur ninety-six times in the Psalter, with sixty-nine occurrences in Books I-III (Tucker 2003: 167). Second, thematic developments revolving around the poor are present (i.e., motifs that find footing in psalms without the use of specific terminology). Third, the psalms envision social contexts where the constellation

of persons shifts from psalmist–YHWH–enemy to psalmist–YHWH–enemy–the poor (Bremer 2016: 355-59) (for the glosses, see *HALOT*, *DCH*, SDBH). On the basis of these categories, Bremer identifies and examines the psalms that he contends possess 'a theology-of-the-poor orientation' (*armentheologischer Ausrichtung*) (Bremer 2016: 359).

Bremer considers Psalm 9/10 the parade example of a theology of the poor psalm, given its prominent position and extensive use of keywords and themes (Bremer 2016: 361) (on the form-critical features favoring the reading of Pss 9-10 as a single psalm, see Junker 1953; Kraus 1993a; deClaissé-Walford, Jacobson, Tanner 2014). This psalm provides a helpful starting point for the present study. The psalm carries the highest concentration of poverty terminology, with the term *ʿānî* ('poor,' 'afflicted') occurring seven times within six verses (Psalms 9:13, 19; 10:2, 9 [2x], 12, 17), the most occurrences of any psalm (for the purposes of this study, I use the Masoretic Text's versification). The word *ʿānî* in nominative or adjective form occurs forty-one times in the Psalter. Psalms 9-10 have the highest concentration, with seven occurrences, while the next highest concentration occurs in two other psalms (Psalms 72, 119) that have three occurrences. The keyword *ḥalkâ* ('helpless') occurs in the Psalter only within this psalm unit (Psalm 10:8, 10, 14), while the corollary term *dak* ('oppressed') occurs twice out of three times in the Psalter (Psalms 9:10; 10:18; cf. 74:21). Moreover, the significant term *ʾebyôn* ('needy') occurs once, parallel with *ʿăniyyîm* (Psalm 9:19), in anticipation of the more common stock phrase 'poor and needy' (*ʿānî wĕʾebyôn*), which occurs eight times across the Psalter (Psalms 35:10; 37:14; 40:18; 70:6; 74:21; 86:1; 109:16, 22) (the terms occur together in the same verse six other times [9:19; 12:6; 72:4, 12; 107:41; 140:13]). Together with the semantic field of poor person terminology, the psalms take up other themes linked to the theology of the poor, such as praise to YHWH for deliverance from oppressive enemies (Psalms 9:4, 7, 13; 10:2) emphasis on the saving acts of YHWH as righteous judge (9:5, 8, 19-20), and thanksgiving for the rescue of the lowly petitioner (10:12, 16-18).

Furthermore, Psalm 9/10 carries a strategic placement within the first grouping of Book I of the Psalter (Pss 3-14). The commonly recognized groupings of the first book include Psalms 3-14, 15-24, 25-34, 35-41 (see Ho 2019: 82-90). The first grouping carries two lament subsets (Psalms 3-7, 9-14) framing an epicenter hymn of praise affirming God's glory in creation and humanity's royal status as divine image-bearer (Ps 8) (see Auwers 2000: 43; Ho 2019: 210-11; deClaissé-Walford, Jacobson, and Tanner 2014: 120; Tate 2001: 343-59). The frames consist in each part of five individual laments, whereby the worshipper calls out for God's deliverance from oppressive enemies. These individual laments incorporate first-person language, whereby the psalmist identifies himself with the poor and needy. A major theme of these laments

revolves around YHWH as the 'refuge' (*ḥsh*) for the destitute, who are his faithful people (5:12; 7:1, 9-10; 9:5; 11:1, 7; 12:1) (Tate 2001: 344). Moreover, Psalms 3 and 7 form an inclusio through the use of the catchword 'head' (*rôš*) (Psalms 3:4; 7:17), links to the Samuel narrative of Absalom's revolt, and the only use of historical superscriptions in the grouping (Ho connects 'Cush the Benjaminite' in Psalm 7 to the messenger who delivers news of Absalom's death in 2 Sam 18:31). The afflicted psalmist of Psalms 3-7 is thus likely the speaker addressing his encomium of praise to YHWH in Psalm 8. Psalm 9/10 extends the theme of Psalm 8, while transitioning to YHWH's kingship as providing the needed refuge for the poor and downtrodden. Despite the poor man's exalted status as God's vice-regent (Psalm 8:6), he is beset by enemies who seek to take his life (Psalm 9:14).

Several implications follow from the theology of the poor orientation of Psalm 9/10. First, the poor occupy a prominent place in the prayer or lament psalms of the Psalter's Book I and in turn set the agenda for the Psalter to move the lowly worshipper from prayer to praise. Bremer notes that each psalm grouping in Book I ends with a psalm carrying a theology of the poor orientation (Psalms 14, 24, 34, 40/41) (Bremer 2017: 102). Furthermore, the strategic placement of Psalm 9/10 furnishes an orientation for the first grouping of Book I (Psalms 3-14). Second, YHWH's sovereign kingship provides a refuge for the poor in ways that human kings fall short of achieving. The Psalter's emphasis on YHWH as refuge carries special force in the opening psalms of Book I, where enemies threaten to end the psalmist's life. The Psalter thus promises blessing for those who take refuge in YHWH vis-à-vis human leaders (cf. Ps 2:12) (Creach 1996: 17-18). The psalmist will later identify himself with the poor and needy, assuming the place of those in need of deliverance rather than of deliverer. The human king depends on YHWH for ultimate vindication, exhibited in the first-person language of Psalm 9/10, including 'my affliction' (*'ānyî*) and 'my just cause' (*mišpāṭî*), phrases that place the psalmist in the stead of the poor, needing YHWH's intervention.

Third, theology of the poor psalms are concerned particularly with justice and salvation, achieved and conferred by YHWH. YHWH's work on their behalf underscores his close, personal affiliation with the poor and needy to move them from trial to triumph. YHWH's close affiliation with the poor and lowly sets the stage for the theme of eschatological reversal with respect to the poor (Meadors 1985: 312). Fourth, theology of the poor psalms hold a close link to the royal psalms, creating a dramatic juxtaposition of the empowered with the powerless. Susan Gillingham has noted that not only are royal psalms often juxtaposed with didactic psalms (e.g., Psalms 1-2, 18-19-20-21, 72-73, 89-90-91, 110-111, 132-133), but royal psalms are also commonly juxtaposed with psalms that emphasize the plight of the poor (Psalms 2-3, 17-18,

20/21-22, 72-73, 88-89, 109-110, 130/131-132, 143-144) (Gillingham 2006: 27-28). This latter juxtaposition, she argues, highlights the discordance between psalms of power and psalms of powerlessness. The poor psalms form a dynamic interplay with the role of the human king, especially given the prominence of poor-oriented psalms in the Davidic collections. The king becomes an emblem of divine salvation as God's vice-regent (Psalm 2:6) while at the same time identifying with the poor and needy who wait for YHWH's deliverance. Having considered the criteria for identifying theology of the poor psalms, we turn now to examine the identity and nature of the poor in the Psalms.

The Nature and Identity of the Poor in Psalms

Beyond identifying which psalms focus on the plight of the poor, an integral aspect of interpreting these psalms lies in determining the nature and identity of the poor. Some have classified the poor in the Psalter as a socio-economic class of disenfranchised, oppressed Jews during the Persian period. Causse thus sees concern for the poor arising from a rift between the social elites and the politically-outcast commoners, the latter being more spiritually attuned to YHWH and messianic expectations (Causse 1922: 83-96; cf. Kuschke 1939). Others have broadened the focus to encompass the whole nation under military threat, with the psalmist representing the suffering community. Graetz connects thus the afflicted people to the Levites especially, who represent the nation as exemplars of pious suffering (Graetz 1882: 19-23; cf. Birkeland 1933).

Building on these other studies, Richard Coggins has noted that in the Psalms the poor are often equated with the godly who trust in YHWH. Psalm 86 thus links 'the poor and needy' (v. 1) to the godly, faithful followers (*ḥāsîd*) who rely upon YHWH (v. 2). The terms for the poor thus 'constitute a *religious* claim; there is nothing . . . which would suggest material poverty' (Coggins 1987: 11). Gillingham likewise concludes that while the terminology of poverty carries complex nuances in the Psalter, in the main the keywords for the poor (*'ānî* and *'ānaw*) refer primarily to spiritual need rather than material need. She concludes that the poor constitute a group that recognizes its spiritual destitution and that depends wholly on God for provision: 'The psalmists were deeply convinced that God was concerned not only about the alleviation of all aspects of material deprivation, but also for the relief of the deep religious needs which the vicissitudes of life presented' (Gillingham 1988: 19). The poor in the Psalms in this way incorporate even the elites of society from a material standpoint, including kings, officials, and prophets, who recognize nonetheless their utter dependence on YHWH for justice and deliverance from their enemies (see Coggins 1987: 13).

In the light of the preceding points, we recognize that theology of the poor psalms focus on key terms, themes, and matrices that revolve around the petitioner's weakness before YHWH, need of deliverance, and dependence on him for justice and spiritual relief. Furthermore, the poor in the Psalms constitute not so much a materially impoverished group but a group that recognizes their deep spiritual need for YHWH's gracious intervention in the midst of adversarial opposition and affliction. By appealing to YHWH the worshipper depends upon God for unfolding salvation through the lens of eschatological reversal. Having established these links, I turn now to examine the eight 'poor and needy' phrases in the Psalter to determine how the sequence moves the petitioner from a recognition of spiritual need to a trust in YHWH as refuge and provider.

Theology of the Poor in Book I

Book I of the Psalter carries the highest concentration of 'poor and needy' terminology, with three occurrences. I begin this examination of the poor and needy in the Psalter with a look at three key mentions in the Psalter's Book I. In this study I am concerned not so much with the dating and external context of these psalms but with their literary placement in the Psalter as benchmarks in a plotline.

Psalm 35: Enemies Threaten the Poor and Needy

The first mention of the 'poor and needy' occurs in Psalm 35, commonly recognized as an individual lament (Anderson 1972: 275; Craigie 1983: 288) or an imprecatory psalm (Simango 2022; Bullock 2015: 262; Ross 2011: 763). The psalm occurs in the first Davidic collection, and heads the final grouping (Psalms 35-41) of Book I. This initial mention of the 'poor and needy' occurs in the Psalter's first imprecatory psalm and frames the Psalter's last mention of the 'poor and needy' in its final imprecatory psalm (Psalm 109) (Bullock identifies three imprecatory psalms in the Psalter: Psalms 35, 69, and 109 [Bullock 2015: 262]). The psalm shares affinities with Psalm 34, which closes the previous grouping, through references to the 'angel of YHWH' (34:8; 35:5-6) (the only psalms where this figure appears) and the theme of 'YHWH's servant' (34:23; 35:27) (Bremer 2016b: 356). The appearance here of the 'poor and needy' anticipates the phrase's threefold occurrence in this psalm grouping (35:10; 37:14; 40:18) and functions as a frame with Psalm 40, which together with Psalm 41 concludes Book I.

Psalm 35 consists of three stanzas: (1) plea for deliverance from enemies (vv. 1-10); (2) plea for vindication concerning enemies (vv. 11-18); and (3) plea for justice over enemies (vv. 19-28) (Ross argues that in the first stanza prayer is dominant, in the second lament, and in the third petition [Ross 2011: 763]). Each stanza ends with the psalmist's promise to praise God for his deliverance (vv. 9-10, 18, 28). The enemies

are not foreign powers but assailants arising from amongst the psalmist's own former confidants (vv. 11-14). Their betrayal thus poses a more insidious and dangerous threat, one that gives the psalmist's plea a more desperate tone (deClaissé-Walford, Jacobson, and Tanner 2014: 331). YHWH stands on the side of the psalmist as his witness (v. 22), advocate (v. 1), and heroic warrior (vv. 2-3) (Kraus 1993a: 395). In the conclusion to the first stanza the psalmist resolves to extol YHWH for his coming salvation: 'Then my soul will rejoice in the LORD and delight in his salvation. My whole being will exclaim, "Who is like you, LORD? You rescue the poor from those too strong for them, the *poor and needy* from those who rob them"' (Psalm 35:9-10, all Scriptural citations are from the NIV).

The 'poor and needy' formula here stresses David's dependence upon YHWH for deliverance in the face of hostile enemies who are fighting against him (v. 1) and threatening to kill him (v. 4). The angel of YHWH will be his protector in driving them away and consigning them to judgment (vv. 5-6). The adversaries will meet just retribution when they fall prey to their own devices (vv. 7-8). David is 'poor and needy' in that, while he remains the installed king upon Zion (Psalm 2:6), he is powerless to achieve victory over his familiar adversaries and is utterly dependent on God for rescue from their spiritual and physical threats. In the Upper Room Discourse Jesus quotes from this psalm (John 15:25; cf. Psalm 35:19) to instruct his disciples that when they experience the world's hatred, they must remember that the world first hated him without cause. This correlation suggests that the NT writers interpreted Psalm 35 as expressing primarily spiritual hostility and spiritual need. Insofar as the imprecatory psalms call upon YHWH for the righteous vindication of the suffering servant and judgment of hostile enemies, the psalm carries messianic overtones (Bullock 2015: 263).

Psalm 37: Enemies Seek to Kill the Poor and Needy

The second 'poor and needy' phrase occurs in Psalm 37, designated usually as a wisdom or didactic psalm (deClaissé-Walford, Jacobson, and Tanner 2014: 348; Bullock 2015: 278). This psalm also falls in the fourth grouping of Book I (Psalms 35-41), where it frames the center psalm, Psalm 38, a supplication psalm, with another wisdom psalm (Psalm 39). Psalm 37 takes the form of an alphabetic acrostic where each new strophe—usually consisting of four lines or two verses—begins with a new letter. The exceptions to a new letter beginning each stanza are ו (vv. 10-11), ח (vv. 14-15), and כ (v. 20), which duplicate the letters within their stanzas. The exceptions to the four-line strophe are vv. 14-15 (six lines), v. 20 (three lines), and vv. 25-26 (five lines) (see Craigie 1983: 296). The letter ס corresponds to three English verses (vv. 27-29), while ק corresponds to one verse (v. 34) (on the other literary features of the psalm,

including paronomasia, alliteration, and semantic-sonantic chiasm, see Lehmann and Levine 2021).

The psalmist identifies himself as an older sage (vv. 25) who instructs his audience regarding YHWH's long-lasting faithfulness (vv. 23-24) as contrasted with the wicked's short-lived success (vv. 35-36). A major theme of the psalm is divine retribution: the provisional prosperity of the wicked will be met in due time with divine justice for their evil deeds, while the righteous will flourish in the divinely-given land.

Beyond the lettered stanzas, the psalm consists of four or five parts, delineated differently by scholars on the basis of the psalm's perceived formal features. Tanner identifies five parts (vv. 1-11, 12-15, 16-26, 27-33, 34-40) (deClaissé-Walford, Jacobson, and Tanner 2014: 348). Ross prefers four parts (vv. 1-6, 7-20, 21-33, 34-40) (Ross 2011: 803-4). Bullock opts for three parts (vv. 1-9, 10-22, 23-40) (Bullock 2015: 279), while Terrien favors two parts (vv. 1-22, 23-40) (Terrien 2003: 317-19). I prefer to see vv. 34-40 as constituting the psalm's final section, on the basis of the imperatival form heading v. 34 ('wait'; *qawwê*) (the first imperative since v. 27) and the framing of 'the wicked' in vv. 34 and 40. The other parts are more difficult to discern. Verses 1-9 may be taken as the first section, on the basis of the framing of the jussive phrase 'do not fret' in vv. 1 and 7-8, with v. 9 providing the rationale for avoiding such frustration: God will judge evildoers and bequeath the land to the righteous (causal *kî* conjunction in v. 9). This section carries a high concentration of volitional forms, with four jussives ('fret not' [*ḥrh*]; 'envy not' [*qn'*] [v. 1]; 'fret not' [*ḥrh*] [vv. 7, 8]) and eleven imperatives ('trust' [*bṭḥ*]; 'do' [*'śh*]; 'dwell' [*škn*]; 'enjoy/pursue [pasture]' [*r'h*] [v. 3]; 'take delight' [*'ng*] [v. 4]; 'commit' [*gll*]; 'trust' [*bṭḥ*] [v. 5]; 'be still' [*dmm*]; 'wait patiently' [*ḥwl*] [v. 7]; 'refrain' [*ḥrp*]; and 'forsake' ['*zb*] [v. 8]). These jussives and imperatives revolve largely around the mindset the righteous must take in view of the hostility of the wicked. After this section, the next volitional form does not occur until the imperative in v. 27. This part features the heaviest concentration of wisdom instruction.

Verse 10 signals a transition from instruction to concrete examples of the principles the psalmist has conferred. The opening *waw* in v. 10 forms part of the acrostic arrangement and functions—when paired with the adverb *'ôd* ('still,' 'now')—as a catalyst to the next part, a meditation on the baleful fate of the wicked as contrasted with the blessing of the righteous: 'yet now.' Verses 10-20 comprise the next section, framed by the mention of 'the wicked' (רָשָׁע) in vv. 10 and 20 and concluded by the unusual strophe formation of v. 20. The keyword *wicked* (*rāšā'*) appears for the first time in this section and occurs the most often, six times or about every other verse (vv. 10, 12, 14, 16, 17, 20). A number of synonyms appear here for the faithful or righteous person, the counterpart to the wicked: 'the lowly' (*'ānāw*) (v. 11), 'the poor and needy' (*'ānî wĕ'ebyôn*) (v. 14), 'the upright of path' (*yišrê-derek*) (v. 14), 'the righteous' (*ṣaddîq*) (vv. 16, 17), and 'the blameless' (*tāmîm*) (v. 18). Verse 20 concludes the sub-

unit with an unusual strophe formation. Unlike the previous strophes that consist of four lines (stichoi) of three or four words each, v. 20 carries only three lines with a 3-4-3 word-count pattern. This abbreviated strophe structure matches its content: the wicked will perish like dried grass and drifting smoke.

The third part of the psalm comprises vv. 21-33. This part is framed by YHWH's blessing (v. 22) in the first letter (ל) and YHWH's protection (v. 33) in the final letter (צ). This section shifts from primary focus on the wicked to primary focus on the righteous. Here the righteous are animated by YHWH's blessing: they show generosity (vv. 21, 26), inherit the land (vv. 22, 29), find the Lord's favor (v. 23), experience the Lord's sustenance (v. 24), enjoy his provision (v. 25), speak Torah wisdom and justice (vv. 30-31), and benefit from the Lord's protection (vv. 32-33). The final part consists of vv. 34-40, framed by YHWH's deliverance of the righteous and his judgment upon the wicked (vv. 34, 40). The section returns to parenetic exhortation, with four imperatives ('wait' [*qwh*] [v. 34]; 'keep' [*šmr*] [vv. 34, 37]; 'watch' [*r'h*] [v. 37]). This part addresses the tension between the seeming prosperity of the wicked in the present age and the promised prosperity of the righteous in the time to come.

The four parts of the psalm, in turn, may be outlined as follows: (1) the righteous must trust in YHWH despite the seeming success of the wicked (vv. 1-9); (2) the wicked will soon be judged by YHWH while the righteous will be delivered to inherit the land (vv. 10-20); (3) the righteous will flourish because YHWH blesses and protects them (vv. 21-33); and (4) the righteous must, in the meantime, live out the Torah and wait expectantly for YHWH's salvation (vv. 34-40). The psalm's reference to the poor and needy occurs in the second part of the psalm. Here the psalmist contrasts the fate of the wicked with the blessing of the righteous. The wicked seek to kill the poor and needy: 'The wicked draw the sword and bend their bows to bring down *the poor and needy*, to slay those whose way is upright' (Ps 37:14). The murderous intention of the wicked moves from settled hostility in Psalm 35 to a resolution to take the life of the poor and needy. Jesus likewise quotes from this psalm in the Beatitudes, promising that the meek will inherit the land (Matthew 5:5; cf. Psalm 37:11). The Beatitudes provide an interesting concatenation of concepts drawn from the theology of the poor psalms. Being poor in spirit is a prerequisite for inheriting the kingdom (Matthew 5:3), followed by mourning over sin to receive comfort (Matthew 5:4). Arising from this spiritual poverty and contrition, the lowly take possession of the land (Matthew 5:5). In Jesus' use of the psalm, the lowly inherit the earth because they trust in the Lord despite the threats and dangers posed by the wicked.

Psalm 40: God Must Deliver the Poor and Needy

Psalm 40 comes near the end of Book I and its fourth grouping. Bremer provides several reasons for taking Psalms 40 and 41 in tandem as the closure for Book I

of the Psalter: (1) the 'blessing' (*ʾašrê*) formula (40:5; 41:2); (2) the nuance of רָעָה (*rāʿâ*) as 'personal harm' or 'trouble' (40:15; 41:2, 8); (3) the theme of deliverance (40:18; 41:2); and (4) the direct address 'You, O Lord' (40:6, 12; 41:11) (Bremer 2017: 102n7). Taken together, these psalms summarize the theology of the poor in Book I as constituting the expectant hope that the spiritual needy hold out for YHWH's eschatological deliverance (Berges and Hoppe 2009: 51-52). Psalm 40 appears to be a mixed-form psalm, with elements of praise, thanksgiving, and prayer (Ross 2011: 855), leading some scholars to posit a composite psalm of two originally independent parts (vv. 2-11, 12-18) (so Kraus 1993a: 423). Craigie rejects this thesis, however, on the basis of common catchwords and form-critical features across the psalm (Craigie 1983: 314). Labels assigned to the psalm include royal liturgy of supplication (Terrien 2003: 335; Craigie 1983: 314), psalm of sacrificial service (Ross 2011: 855), or individual thanksgiving song (Bullock 2015: 304; Kraus 1993a: 423). Psalm 40 holds an uncertain connection to Psalm 70, another poor and needy psalm discussed below, in that Psalm 70 reproduces Ps 40:14-18 with minor variations (Craigie argues that Psalm 40 is original, composed during the monarchical period, and that Psalm 70 is an adaptation written during the exile [Craigie 1983: 314]).

Most interpreters divide the psalm into two parts, although there is no consensus as to the extent of the sections. Kraus thus favors the division of vv. 1-12 and vv. 13-18 (Kraus 1993a: 422). Goldingay champions vv. 1-13 and vv. 14-18 (Goldingay 2006: 568), while Ross prefers vv. 1-11 and vv. 12-18 (Ross 2011: 857). Most persuasive is to observe a structural marker and transition in the direct address of v. 12: 'As for you, O Lord' (Ross 2011: 354). Following the superscription (v. 1), this produces two parts: (1) thanksgiving for YHWH's deliverance from the pit (vv. 2-11) and (2) prayer for YHWH's continued deliverance in view of his steadfast love (vv. 12-18). The parts exhibit a bifid structure of mirrored openings, with 'I waited expectantly for YHWH' (v. 2) undergoing reversal in 'As for you, O YHWH, you will not withhold your mercy from me' (v. 12). The 'as for you' heading the second part (v. 12) also anticipates the 'as for me' of the final verse. In this final verse, as part of his plea for YHWH's future salvation, the psalmist for the first time identifies himself with the poor and needy, who wait upon God: 'But as for me, I am *poor and needy*; may the Lord think of me. You are my help and my deliverer; you are my God, do not delay' (Ps 40:18). The psalmist's identification with the poor and needy stands as a foil to the Lord's concern and expected help. The plight of the poor and needy receives emphasis by the phrase's placement in the psalm's final verse, the psalm's consummative plea for deliverance. The jussive forms יַחְשֹׁב (*yaḥšāb*) ('may [the Lord] take thought') and אַל־תְּאַחַר (*ʾal-tĕʾaḥar*) ('do not delay') express the psalmist's urgency for YHWH's intervention.

Taken with Psalm 35, Psalms 40-41 provide a frame for the poor and needy in Book I of the Psalter. Several conclusions follow. First, the phrase 'poor and needy'

by its strategic placement in the fourth grouping of Book I sets an agenda for the rest of the Psalter. Book I consists primarily of prayer/lament psalms (19) rather than praise psalms (4), building toward a reversal in Book V with more praise psalms (14) than prayer/lament psalms (6). The higher concentration here of 'poor and needy' language accords well with the book's emphasis on the vital link between prayer and spiritual need. Second, the use of the phrase displays a dynamic that moves from threats to murderous intent to expectation of God's imminent deliverance. In the first and last example God is present in the dire situation (Psalms 35:10; 40:18). This movement suggests that the concept of the poor and needy is not a static one but one that shows progression through the initial stages of the Psalter. Third, the poor and needy move from a marginalized group to one that the psalmist identifies himself with. Such an identification denotes that the psalmist, regardless of his social status, recognizes his utter need and dependence on YHWH. He embodies the plight of the poor and needy. The conclusions of Books I and III thus highlight the psalmist's inclusion of himself in this group through first-person language (Psalms 40:18; 86:1). This forms an interlocking frame with the first-person language of Book II's first mention (Psalm 70:6) and Book V's last mention of the poor and needy (Psalm 109:21).

Theology of the Poor in Books II-III

The role of the poor and needy shifts somewhat in Books II-III of the Psalter, with a growing emphasis on the communal nature of the spiritual needy in the Asaphite collection. Here the link of David with the poor and needy expands to include the larger congregation of Israel as represented by the psalmist Asaph.

Psalm 70: God Must Quickly Deliver the Poor and Needy

Psalm 70 reprises Ps 40:14-18 with minor variations: a few of the distinctions include the designation of the psalm as a 'memorial/invocation' (Psalm 70:1) instead of 'a psalm' (Psalm 40:1), along with a handful of altered verbs: (1) 'hasten' (*ḥwš*) (70:2) versus 'be pleased' (*rṣh*) (40:14); (2) 'turn back' (*šwb*) (70:4) versus 'be appalled' (*šmm*) (40:16); and (3) 'hasten' (*ḥwš*) (70:6) versus 'think of' (*ḥšb*) (40:18). Hamilton suggests that the superscription 'memorial' intends to conjure Psalm 40 as a reprisal of that psalm's situation (Hamilton 2021: 619). Interpreters often designate the psalm as an individual lament (Bullock 2015: 530). Psalm 70, together with Psalms 69, 71, and 72, functions as a cohort to conclude the second Davidic collection as well as the Psalter's Book II, incorporating several common elements: (1) the appropriation of language from the final grouping of Book I, Psalms 35-41 (especially as Psalm 70 = Psalm 40:14-18); (2) key themes, such as 'enemies' (69:5, 8, 11; 70:3; 71:13, 24), 'shame' (69:7; 70:3; 71:1, 13, 24), and 'hasten' (69:18; 70:2, 6; 71:12); (3) a pervasive

theology of the poor (*ʿānî* ['poor'] occurs in Psalms 69:30; 70:6; 72:2, 4, 12; *ʾebyôn* ['needy'] occurs in Psalms 69:34; 70:6; 72:4, 12, 13); and (4) a unique character as a concluding collection replicating Book I's conclusion (Hossfeld 1998: 66-67; Bullock 2015: 530-32; Hossfeld and Zenger 2005: 184, 199). The psalm is often identified as an exilic adaptation of the monarchical-period Psalm 40 (Hossfeld and Zenger 2005: 189).

The psalm consists of four parts, fashioned in a chiastic arrangement (Ross 2011: 511-12; Hossfeld and Zenger 2005: 188):

A Appeal to God to hasten deliverance for the psalmist (v. 2)
  B Invocation of God to put to shame the psalmist's enemies (vv. 3-4)
  B′ Invocation of God to grant joy to his people (v. 5)
A′ Appeal to God to hasten deliverance for the 'poor and needy' psalmist (v. 6).

In this arrangement, the opening and closing parts constitute an appeal to God, with a stressed urgency in the repetition of the Qal imperative form 'hasten' (vv. 2, 6). In the final appeal the psalmist identifies himself again with the poor and needy: 'But as for me, *I am poor and needy*; come quickly to me, O God. You are my help and my deliverer; Lord, do not delay' (Psalm 70:6). The use of the doublet formula—the repetition of the same biblical material in two different contexts (cf. Psalm 14 = 53; Psalms 57/60 = 108; Exodus 20 = Deuteronomy 5; Isaiah 2:1-4 = Micah 4:1-4)—serves to highlight their mutual themes while reappropriating the material into a new context where fresh connections can be made (Hamme 2017; cf. Hossfeld and Zenger 2005: 186). The urgency that the psalmist expresses in Psalm 40 is thus intensified here, as the jussive form 'may [the Lord] take thought' in Psalm 40:18 changes to the imperative 'hasten' in Psalm 70:6. The concept that the Lord must deliver the poor and needy psalmist in Psalm 40 has now become an urgent appeal to quickly appear for the psalmist's deliverance because his life depends upon it.

Psalm 74: The Poor and Needy Will Praise God's Name after Deliverance

Psalm 74 is a communal lament mourning the desolation of the land and desecration of the sanctuary by foreign invaders (Ross 2013: 580; Bullock 2017: 9; deClaissé-Walford, Jacobson, and Tanner 2014: 594). Most interpreters place the psalm in the exilic period and link its content to the destruction of the temple by the Babylonians in 586 b.c. (Hossfeld and Zenger 2005: 243; Bullock 2017: 9). The psalm follows the opening psalm of Book III, Psalm 73, a wisdom theodicy lamenting the seeming prosperity of the wicked and the injustices they impose upon the land. Psalm 74 hints at a shared wisdom origin with the superscription *maśkîl* (a 'wisdom song' or 'skilled compo-

sition'), likely related to the root *śkl*, prominent in the David narrative to showcase his prudence (Forti and Glatt-Gilad 2015). Paired together, Psalms 73-74 introduce the Asaph collection (Psalms 73-83) with a turn toward theodicy, bemoaning God's apparent absence in view of the power and blasphemy of the wicked vis-à-vis God's promised presence in his sanctuary to aid his people and judge evildoers (Hossfeld and Zenger 2005: 250). The psalms anticipate the other Asaphite wisdom psalm (Psalm 78) and lament psalms (Psalms 77, 79-80, 83), together with God's response, anticipating his coming judgment of the wicked (Psalms 75-76, 81-82) (Ho 2019: 95).

The psalm consists of four or five parts. Sharrock favors a five-part chiastic arrangement on the basis of the verb conjugations (Sharrock 1983; cf. more recent alternative view that sees three parts with a redactional interpolation in Greene 2017):

A Imperatives (vv. 1-3)
  B *Qatal* (vv. 4-9)
    C *Yiqtol* (vv. 10-11)
  B′ *Qatal* (vv. 12-17)
A′ Imperatives (vv. 18-23)

Preferable, however, is the proposed structure of Ross, building on Weiss's work, which delimits four parts (vv. 1-3, 4-11, 12-17, 18-23), with vv. 1-3 serving as an introduction to the remainder of the psalm (Ross 2013: 581-82; Weiss 1984: 281-93). Viewed this way the psalm focuses on the present devastation that exhibits God's anger toward his people (v. 1, 4-11), the past remembrance of God's redemption of his people (vv. 2, 12-17), and the future hope of God's deliverance from these enemies (vv. 3, 18-23). The poor and needy phrasing falls within the final part, where the psalmist looks to the future and asks God to remember his covenant so as not to forsake his people but to deliver them. This anticipated salvation will result in praise from the afflicted: 'Do not let the oppressed retreat in disgrace; may the *poor and needy* praise your name' (Psalm 74:21). The jussive form of the verb *hll* ('may they praise' or 'they must praise') adds urgency to the tone of the psalmist's appeal. The plural verb forms within this communal lament position the poor and needy within the broader framework of the community that has suffered affliction as a result of the temporary triumph of evildoers and enemies. They appeal, along with the rest of the suffering nation, for God's hastened deliverance from the wicked. As with the previous psalm, the outcry of the poor and needy comes in the psalm's final part for emphasis.

Psalm 86: The Poor and Needy Depend upon YHWH for Such Mercy

Psalm 86 is a lone Davidic psalm interspersed with the Korahite Psalms 84-85 and 87-88, found at the end of the Asaphite collection (Psalms 73-83). The psalm is usu-

ally recognized as an individual lament, with a mixture of themes (Bullock 2017: 105; Ross 2013: 783; Ho designates the psalm as a kingship psalm [Ho 2019: 95]). David speaks here not so much as a king vast in power but as a suffering servant trusting in the gracious and compassionate YHWH as revealed in the Torah (cf. Psalm 86:15 with Exodus 34:6) (Bullock 2017: 105). The psalm is often dated late by scholars who conclude that the psalm lacks originality, but this fails to account for the psalm's skillful use of the Mosaic tradition and earlier psalmic material.

The psalm consists of three parts, as organized around the imperative verbs of the first and third sections (vv. 1-7, 11-17) with a hinge praise to God for his incomparable greatness (vv. 8-10): (1) prayer to God for mercy in the light of his compassion and steadfast love (vv. 1-7); (2) praise to God for his glorious works that befit his greatness (vv. 8-10); and (3) prayer for strength to be faithful and for God to show continued kindness and mercy (vv. 11-17) (Ross 2013: 781-83; Hossfeld and Zenger also see three parts but combine vv. 11-13 with the hinge of praise to God (Hossfeld and Zenger 2005: 368). Here the psalmist's identification with the poor and needy finds expression at the outset of the psalm: 'Hear me, Lord, and answer me, for *I am poor and needy*' (Psalm 86:1). The psalmist is not only himself poor and needy but also the possessor of an elevated status as YHWH's servant (vv. 2, 4). The psalmist nonetheless positions himself among the afflicted who stand in need of YHWH's intervention, giving impetus to his request that the Lord heed his prayer. Thematically the poor and needy phrasing links to the Torah background of YHWH's steadfast love and faithfulness as the motivations for his actions toward his people (Exodus 34:6). The poor and needy appeal to YHWH for mercy precisely because he is a God abounding in steadfast love.

Theology of the Poor in Book V

The Psalter's Book V turns toward an eschatological, redemptive-kingdom focus, with the opening theme of eschatological regathering of God's dispersed people (Psalm 107) and the Songs of Ascent (Psalms 120-134), which the regathered people sing on their journey to Zion. Within this book falls the final two Davidic collections (Psalms 108-110, 138-145). In these last two collections, David takes an afflicted and distressed tone (Psalms 109, 140-143), while also celebrating YHWH's kingship (Psalm 138), his own vice-regency from Zion (Psalms 108, 110), and the eventual merging of their rules (Psalm 145) (Ho 2019: 257).

Psalm 109: The Poor and Needy Are Harassed but Ultimately Delivered by YHWH

Psalm 109 falls within the fourth Davidic collection (Psalms 108-110). These psalms form a triptych in which the king asks for divine aid in the central psalm to establish justice for the poor as part of his efforts in the framing psalms to his subdue enemies

foreign and domestic in order to establish his throne (Hossfeld and Zenger 2011: 136). In these petitions the king represents the nation as he again embodies the poor and needy standing in need of God's help. The psalm follows the basic contours of the individual lament, with the inclusion of an extended imprecation in vv. 6-19 (Estes 2019: 330; Allen 2002: 100). This imprecation joins with Psalm 35 to frame the imprecatory psalms of the Psalter (Psalms 35, 69, 109) as well as the Psalter's theology of the poor psalms (Psalms 35, 37, 40, 70, 74, 86, 109).

The psalm consists of six parts, although often divided in other ways: (1) an invocation to God for action (v. 1); (2) lament concerning the words and deeds of the wicked (vv. 2-5); (3) imprecation against the evil one who has betrayed the psalmist (vv. 6-15); (4) additional lament over the words and deeds of the wicked (vv. 16-20); (5) prayer for God's love and vindication (vv. 21-29); and (6) a closing benediction to God for his deliverance (vv. 30-31) (VanGemeren 1991: 804). The psalm carries two references to the poor and needy in the fourth and fifth parts. In the second lament over the words and deeds of the wicked, the psalmist decries the evil one for harassing the poor: 'For he never thought of doing a kindness, but hounded to death *the poor and the needy* and the brokenhearted' (Psalm 109:16). Here the poor and needy stand external to the psalmist, a community of sufferers oppressed by the wicked.

In the final phrasing, however, the psalmist again identifies himself with the poor and needy, crying out for God's deliverance: 'But you, Sovereign Lord, help me for your name's sake; out of the goodness of your love, deliver me, for *I am poor and needy*, and my heart is wounded within me' (Psalm 109:21-22). In this final call the psalmist identifies himself with the poor and needy for the last of four times in the Psalter (Psalms 40:18; 70:6; 86:1; 109:16). The psalmist seeks to establish justice for the poor while recognizing that he stands in their stead in his pleas for divine deliverance and vindication. The twofold repetition of the 'poor and needy' phrasing in the psalm emphasizes this theme as integral to the Davidic collections and shows a growing urgency on the part of the poor for God's salvation within the larger progression of the Psalter. This psalm finds NT expression in Acts 1:20, where Peter cites Psalm 109:8 to ground his appeal for the selection of an apostle to replace Judas ('may his days be few; may another take his place of leadership'). The eschatological tone of Book V colors the surety of eschatological deliverance that the psalmist envisions.

Conclusion and Implications

Traced from its inception to conclusion, the poor and needy phrasing follows a trajectory from suffering to triumph, from oppression to deliverance, from denigration to vindication. The storyline begins with increasing tension as the life of the poor and needy is threatened and endangered by enemies who wish to kill him. Through the lens of the psalmist, he appeals to YHWH for deliverance, as the psalmist links

himself to the plight of the poor and needy. God must intervene and do so quickly to preserve the life of the afflicted psalmist and those who share his fate. There is hope in the midst of this suffering, however, as the poor and needy will be sure to praise God's name after deliverance and will thank him for his abundant steadfast love. This culminates in a final declaration that although the poor and needy have been 'hounded to death' (Psalm 109:16), they will ultimately declare God's victory through their (eschatological) deliverance. This plotline is evident in the themes of the seven psalms that mention the poor and needy: (1) enemies threaten the poor and needy (Psalm 35); (2) enemies seek to kill the poor and needy (Psalm 37); (3) God must deliver the poor and needy (Psalm 40); (4) God must *quickly* deliver the poor and needy (Psalm 70); (5) the poor and needy will praise God's name after deliverance (Psalm 74); (6) the poor and needy depend upon YHWH for such mercy (Psalm 86); and (7) the poor and needy are harassed but ultimately delivered by YHWH (Psalm 109).

Several implications follow from this outline of the poor and needy in the Psalter. First, the enemies of the poor and needy are not only physical but spiritual—they threaten both to take the life of the poor and needy and to vitiate his spiritual vitality. The plight and posture of the poor and needy thus transcends physical need to incorporate spiritual need. Second, a dynamic plotline moves the psalmist—who represents the poor and needy—along a trajectory from suffering to salvation. This dynamic is evident in the movement from enemies (Psalms 35, 37) to God (Psalms 40, 70, 74, 86) to YHWH's triumph over the enemies (Psalm 109). Third, the imprecatory psalms that frame the poor and needy psalms (Psalms 35, 109) highlight a messianic motif of the suffering servant awaiting God's righteous vindication. The NT writers see this pattern culminating in Jesus Christ.

Fourth, in the NT Jesus and the apostles quote from several poor and needy psalms to establish the messianic horizon of the Psalter. Thus, Jesus cites Psalms 35 and 37 to apply his wise teaching concerning the spiritual realities necessary for the disciple: he must recognize the world will hate him (Psalm 35:19 in John 15:25), but by his meekness he will inherit the land (Psalm 37:11 in Matthew 5:5). Likewise, the apostle Peter quotes Psalm 109 to cast Judas as the enemy who appropriates the imprecation of the psalm by betraying Christ (Psalm 109:8 in Acts 1:20). These links hint at the typological connection between David's identification with the poor and needy, appealing for God's help in the face of his enemies, and its consummative counterpart in Jesus' suffering, death, and vindication. In his identification with the poor and needy, David serves as a type of Christ, who himself identifies with and vindicates the poor and needy by delivering them from their spiritual poverty (Matthew 11:5; Luke 4:18; 7:22). These threads collectively weave together a fifth and final point. The worshipper who enters the 'great house' of the Psalter treads the same path

as David and ultimately as Jesus: despite opposition and vitriol, he casts his hope on God for vindication and deliverance, with the serene confidence that God will extend steadfast love so that in the end the psalmist and worshipper may collectively praise God for his deliverance and worship him forever.

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