

When the Messianic Vision Recedes: YHWH's Kingship & the Mosaic Figure in Second Isaiah and Book Four of the Psalter

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Critical studies of the book of Isaiah and the Hebrew Psalter have revealed important links between the two books in general, and between Second Isaiah and Book IV of the Psalter in particular. Researches on the affinities between Second Isaiah and Book IV of the Psalter by modern critical scholars have hitherto sought to demonstrate the interrelationship between the two units on historical-referential, formal, or editorial grounds.¹ The affinities between the two texts in the final form within their respective canonical contexts, however, remain a domain yet to be explored in scrutiny.

Christopher Seitz's provocative article, "Royal Promises in the Canonical Books of Isaiah and the Psalms,"² pioneers a canonical reading of the parallels between Second Isaiah and Book IV of the Psalter. Reading the book of Isaiah as a unity, Seitz is intrigued to trace the development of themes throughout the book as a whole. The driving question for his inquiry pertains to the messianic promise in the book of Isaiah. Seitz notices that the messianic hopes once so prominent in Is 1–39 seem to disappear, or have been transferred, in the second half of the book (Is 40–66). Such a transition is highly analogous to that between Books I–III and Book IV of the Psalter. And in Second Isaiah (Is 40–55, especially the opening chapters) the emphasis on YHWH's kingship over creation with Zion at its centre, over nations, and over the people of Israel is also a major theme at the core of Book IV (Ps 93–100).³ Through parallel reading with Book IV, Seitz demonstrates in detail how these striking similarities function as a window for the readers to resolve the mystery of the development of the messianic theme in the book of Isaiah.

This paper, adopting a canonical approach, seeks to build on Seitz's preliminary observations and at the same time explore in further detail the affinities between Second Isaiah and Book IV of the Psalter. While Seitz discerns in both texts the absence of the royal promises and the emphasis on the divine kingship, I would like to add that the allusions to Moses—explicit reminiscence of Moses in Book IV, and representation of the Moses-like Servant in Second Isaiah—are also permeated in both materials. The absence of the royal promises and the emphasis on divine kingship in Is 40–66, for Seitz, signify a distinction between First Isaiah and the latter half of the book, between the former and the new things.⁴ I will further articulate that such distinction, in accord with the distinction between Books I–III and Book IV of the Psalter, represents a shift in Israel's perspective on the kingship which governed and defined her as a nation.⁵

¹ See my brief survey of the history of scholarship on the connections between Second Isaiah and Book IV of the Psalter in Section II of this paper.

² Christopher R. Seitz, *Word Without End: The Old Testament as Abiding Theological Witness* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2004), 150–167.

³ Ibid., 162–3.

⁴ Ibid., 161.

⁵ An exploration of the concept of kingship in the ancient Near East will be helpful in understanding the importance of kingship for the community of the ancient Israel. Among the three elements of centralization of power, i.e. kingship, courts and temples, kingship was a highly successful form of government—of order and structure—in ancient Near Eastern societies. For a succinct discussion, cf. Nancy L. deClaissé-Walford, "Kingship in the ancient

This paper is comprised of five parts. First, I will demarcate the two units of text in question, i.e. Second Isaiah and Book IV of the Psalter. The question for us to ask is how they are read as ‘books’, or ‘units’, within their respective canonical books. Secondly, I shall briefly survey the history of the modern critical biblical studies, concentrating on researches of the connections between the book of Isaiah and the Psalter in general, and between Second Isaiah and Book IV of the Psalter in particular. Since the survey does not intend to be comprehensive, only a few representative scholars and their findings will be mentioned. With the survey I shall situate the context of my own approach and the questions that drive my inquiry. The third part will demonstrate a canonical reading of the Psalter, especially Book IV, synthesizing the precious insights from recent Psalms studies. The purpose is to form a background with which my canonical reading of Second Isaiah will be compared. The last two sections of the paper will be devoted respectively to the discussion of the Moses-like Servant and the divine kingship in Second Isaiah.

Through a parallel and canonical reading of Second Isaiah and Book IV, we shall observe that the two texts not only relate to each other on linguistic, generic, or editorial grounds, but also in narrative effects within their canonical books. We shall conclude that both Second Isaiah and Book IV of the Psalter stand on a pivotal point in the thematic development of the respective books as a whole—they function as a shift in focus from the messianic hopes in a human king to an eschatological faith in YHWH’s kingship.⁶ During this transition, they both evoke allusions, implicitly or explicitly, to the authoritative figure of Moses from Israel’s exodus memory.

I. UNITS IN QUESTION

Before we launch into a parallel reading of Book IV of the Psalter and Second Isaiah, the designation and demarcation of these two units of texts should be clarified at the outset. Book IV of the Psalter as a unit is clear. The Hebrew Psalter comprises five books marked by five conspicuous doxologies—Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Amen and Amen—and other analogous refrains at the closure of Ps 41, 72, 89, 106, and 150, i.e. the concluding psalms of each book. These refrains represent a strong clue to an intentional editorial endeavour to divide the Psalter into five books. The implication is obvious, as recorded in the *Midrash* on Psalm 1:1, that “Moses gave the Israelites the five books of the Torah, and corresponding to these David gave them the book of Psalms which consists of five books.”⁷ Book IV consists of Ps 90–106. G. Wilson explains that Ps 90–106 are editorially intended as a ‘book’ in the Psalter based on (1) recognized editorial techniques and (2) the unique prominence of the figure of Moses unsurpassed by the other four books of the Psalter.⁸

Near East,” in *Reading from the Beginning: The Shaping of the Hebrew Psalter* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1997), 57–66.

⁶ I intend to focus on the comparisons of the thematic transitions between First Isaiah to Second Isaiah and Books I–III to Book IV of the Psalter. The transitions from Second Isaiah to Third Isaiah and Book IV to Book V, however, do not belong to the extent of this paper.

⁷ *Midrash on Psalms: Translated from the Hebrew and Aramaic by William G. Braude*, (New Haven: Yale University, 1959); F. Delitzsch, *Psalms*, (Commentary on the Old Testament vol. V; translated by James Martin; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 15.

⁸ Gerald H. Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, SBL Dissertation Series 76, J. J. M. Roberts (Chico: Scholar Press, 1985), 214–219; Jerome Creach, “The Shape of Book Four of the Psalter and the Shape of Second Isaiah,” in *Journal for the Studies of the Old Testament* 80 (1998), 65.

The book of Isaiah, on the other hand, does not contain ostensible partitions. However, with the dawn of the historical critical study in the eighteenth century, scholars came to distinguish the first half of the book (chs. 1–39) from the second (chs. 40–66), arguing for two different authors behind each text.⁹ Duhm later separated chs. 56–66 off from Second Isaiah and attributed these final chapters to a Third Isaiah.¹⁰ Since then, the tripartite nature of the book of Isaiah has steadily reached a universal consensus among Old Testament scholars.¹¹ Though the tripartition of the book of Isaiah is admittedly unchallenged by modern critical scholars, the demarcation of the second part is not so self-evident. Locating the upper limit of Second Isaiah at 40:1 is not arbitrary and is universally agreed, since the transition from chs. 1–39 to chs. 40ff. demonstrates a dramatic change in terms of style, historical horizon, and message.¹² The location of the lower limit, nevertheless, involves much discussion and emendation.¹³ Generally speaking, the traditional view that Second Isaiah ends at ch. 55 remains the predominant one in Isaiah study. As such, this paper adopts the traditional demarcation of Second Isaiah, namely chs. 40–55.

II. CONTEXT OF STUDY AND METHODOLOGY

Throughout the history of critical study of the book of Isaiah and the Psalms, scholars have noticed the close relationship not merely between the two books in general, but also between Second Isaiah and Book IV of the Psalter in particular.¹⁴ In this section, I will first briefly survey the scholars, in different periods and of different methodologies, who seek to delineate the connections between the book of Isaiah and the Psalms (especially, Second Isaiah and Book IV). Through the lens of their observation, we will see how they define the nature and implications of the links. And secondly, I shall articulate the methodology employed in this paper, by locating it in the context of modern critical approaches as follows.

⁹ Döderlein (1775) was the first person to differentiate between the two. His thesis was accepted by Eichorn (1780 – 83). From then on, this view gradually won its way to universal consensus in Isaiah scholarship. See Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66: A Commentary*, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), 8–9.

¹⁰ Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 323; Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 9.

¹¹ Delitzsch, who defended the single authorship of Isaiah as late as 1880, changed his mind toward the end of his life in his commentary (1889). After that there were virtually no critical scholars left who persisted to defend the traditional view. There are, however, a few exceptions: the conservative scholars associated with Princeton Theological Seminary (until 1929) and Westminster Theological Seminary, e.g. E. J. Young (1965–72) and recent conservative scholars like E. J. Kissane (1941–3), J. A. Motyer, and B. Webb. Cf. J. A. Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*, (Downers Grove, InterVarsity Press, 1999); B. Webb, *Message of Isaiah: on Eagle's Wing*, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996). Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation: Past & Present* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 312–3.

¹² Gene M. Tucker, “Introduction,” *The Book of Isaiah 1–39: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections in The New Interpreter’s Bible*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001), 30

¹³ For example, Elliger assumes that the whole of chs. 54–55 do not come from Second Isaiah, but from Third Isaiah, and therefore the lower boundary of the unit should be ch. 53; see Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 28. C. Seitz, though expresses some reservation, proposes that the final servant song (Isa. 52.13–53.12) marked a beginning of a new section. When discussing the placement of the final servant song in the canonical form of the book of Isaiah, Seitz explains that “[t]his poem represents the culmination of all that precedes and constitutes the decisive boundary line in the larger discourse (chaps. 40–66), as the text moves from the achievement of the servant (40.1 – 52.11) to the work of the servants (54.1–66.24). See Christopher Seitz, *The Book of Isaiah 40–66: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections*, (The New Interpreter’s Bible; Nashville: Abingdon, 2001), 460.

¹⁴ In the following discussion I will use Book IV as an abbreviation to designate Book IV of the Hebrew Psalter.

1. Reading the Text in Its Historical Setting: Direct Referential Method

B. Childs, in his survey of the history of critical study on the book of Isaiah, points out that historical critical study of the prophets began with Isaiah because of its great importance reckoned by the Christian church.¹⁵ In the nineteenth century, the intensity of critical research on the book was only second to the Pentateuch.¹⁶ The objective of the direct referential approach utilized by the critical scholars of this period, as Seitz summarizes, “tends to maximize the extent of the present literature attributable to the prophet Isaiah on a variety of grounds (historical, biological, and rhetorical).”¹⁷ The legacy of this old historical-critical method lies in: (1) the theory of tripartition of the book of Isaiah and, (2) the recognition of three discrete periods in Israel’s history which gave rise to the three parts respectively, i.e. First Isaiah—pre-exilic times, Second Isaiah—exilic, and Third Isaiah—post-exilic. Though the focus of interest in Isaianic research has shifted greatly in the course of the twentieth century, the direct referential method has immensely enriched Isaianic scholarship unto the twenty-first century.

The direct referential approach to the Psalms, on the other hand, obliges critical readers to abandon the psalms’ titles, since they are deemed as late, inauthentic, and insignificant.¹⁸ Having discarded the superscriptions, scholars seek to reconstruct specific historical settings for the psalms.¹⁹ However, according to Childs’ evaluation, the result was basically unsuccessful.²⁰

Among the scholars of this literary-historical approach, J. W. Thirtle was one of the personages who searched for historical connections between the psalms and the book of Isaiah.²¹ The intermediate linkage between the two, Thirtle argued, occurs in the person of King Hezekiah. He contended that the second half of the book of Isaiah (chs. 40–66) is virtually about Hezekiah who also authored the songs of ascents (Ps 120–134) and edited the final form of the Psalter. The key passage that leads to Thirtle’s surmise is 38:20 which records Hezekiah’s resolution to offer up songs all the days of his life with thanksgiving for YHWH’s merciful healing. Thirtle asserted that the corresponding number in YHWH’s promise to lengthen Hezekiah’s life—by fifteen years—and the number of the songs of ascents—fifteen in total—serves as the link of the historical background of Ps 120–134 to the events in Hezekiah’s life recorded in the book of Isaiah. Not only did Hezekiah compose the fifteen psalms during the fifteen prolonged years, his unique experience of divine salvation furnished an adequate influence for the formation of the Psalter.

Thirtle’s effort in his intertextual reading of the book of Isaiah and the Psalms is typical of direct referential inquiry in that it seeks to maximize the extent of the intersection between the two texts on the historical and biological ground of the person of Hezekiah. Thirtle’s intertextual reading is right to discern the positive, exemplary image of Hezekiah in the history of Israel

¹⁵ Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, 311–325.

¹⁶ The representative scholars in the critical study of Isaiah are J.C. Döderlein (1775), Eichhorn (1803), Gesenius (1821), G. A. Smith (1890), S. R. Driver (1891), and Duhm (1921), to name but a few. For a detail survey of the early critical Isaiah study, see Seitz, “First Isaiah,” *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, (Vol. III; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 472–475.

¹⁷ Ibid., 475.

¹⁸ Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, 509. The exemplary scholar, for example, is Hengstenberg (1842).

¹⁹ For example, Duhm often dated the Psalms in the Maccabean period. Ibid.

²⁰ Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, 509.

²¹ James W. Thirtle, *Old Testament Problems: Critical Studies in the Psalms and Isaiah*, (London: Morgan & Scott, 1916).

based on the biblical references in 2 Kg 18:5 and Is 36–39 and other extra-canonical literature (Sir 48:22; 49:4). Nevertheless, the attempt to make the king the author of the psalms of ascents and the final editor of the Psalter can hardly be substantiated and, therefore, appears to be too far-fetched.

2. Reading the Text in Its Life Setting—Form-Critical Method.

H. Gunkel's (1926) brilliant form-critical approach to the biblical texts has pioneered a groundbreaking methodology in reaction to the unsatisfactory results by the direct referential endeavour. In the Psalms study, Gunkel opined that the historical settings of the psalms were not to be sought in particular historical events, but rather in the cultic life of the community. In classifying the genres of the psalms, Gunkel came to notice the prominent prophetic elements existent in certain psalms. Book IV, in particular, contains many psalms (the so-called 'YHWH *malak*' Psalms, i.e. Ps 93–100) which fall into the genre of the 'eschatological Psalms'.²² Through the lens of formal analysis, Gunkel saw a strong link between these psalms and the prophetic poems in Second Isaiah,²³ which in turn led him to conclude that the eschatological elements in the psalms virtually derived from the prophecies in Second Isaiah.

The intimate connections between the psalms in Book IV and the prophetic materials in Second Isaiah can be seen peculiarly in the Enthronement psalms and the culminating message of Second Isaiah, i.e. 52:7–10.²⁴ While Gunkel and his student, S. Mowinckel, both observed such phenomenal connections, they provided distinct, and even opposing, explanations for these connections. Based on analogous practices in other parts of the ancient Near East, Mowinckel advocated that these psalms functioned within the cult to usher in the New Year and celebrate YHWH's enthronement.²⁵ He argued that these psalms were composed to be used during this autumn festival throughout the time of David's dynasty. Psalmic poetry thus was the place in which the eschatology of YHWH's kingship was developed and then influenced the authors of Second Isaiah during the exile.²⁶ Mowinckel's theory received its share of criticism.²⁷ Gunkel was correctly suspicious of exactly how accurate one can conjecture the existence of such festivals in the ancient Israel.²⁸ Secondly, locating the *Sitz im Leben* of the YHWH *malak* psalms in the post-exilic period, he asserted that the direction of influence should be the reverse. In other

²² Within the genre of 'eschatological Psalms,' Gunkel also subdivided it into eschatological hymns (Ps 9, 68, 98, 149), eschatological Zion songs (Ps 46, 48, 76), and eschatological enthronement songs (Ps 47, 93, 96, 97, 99). Cf. Hermann Gunkel, *Introduction to Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1998), 251–292.

²³ These formal similarities are, to name but a few: the concept of YHWH's grace and salvation for Israel alongside the hope for YHWH's self-illumination via world judgment and dominion (cf. Ps 96:3; 97:8; 98:1; Is 41:13, 14; 43:1; 44:23, 28; 49:13), jubilant cry for joy (Ps 97:12; Is 54:1), call for a 'new song' to express this enthusiastic mood which encompasses the eschatological hope (Ps 96:1; 98:1; Is 42:10), and the salvation and transfiguration of Zion for the nations to see (Ps 98; Is 49:14ff.; 52:1–12), the lordship of YHWH and the futility of the idols (Ps 97:7, 9; 99:1; Is 42:17; 45:16), and so on.

²⁴ Gunkel's classification of YHWH's Enthronement songs includes Ps 93, 97, 99 (Psalms that begin with the words, "YHWH has become King." See Gunkel, *Introduction to Psalms*, 66–81. Mowinckel, on the other hand, labelled Ps 47, 93, 95–100 as YHWH's Enthronement songs for they display the theme of YHWH's kingship. See Eaton's discussion of Mowinckel. J. H. Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms* (Naperville: Alec R. Allenson, 1976), 105–7.

²⁵ Sigmund Mowinckel, *Psalmstudien* (II; Amsterdam: Verlag P. Schippers, 1961), 6–8.

²⁶ Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms*, 107

²⁷ For a brief survey on the scholarly critiques of Mowinckel's 'Enthronement Festival' hypothesis, see Robert E. Wallace, *The Narrative Effect of Book IV in the Psalter* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 34–35.

²⁸ Gunkel, *Introduction to Psalms*, 276–7.

words, the source of the eschatological concepts of YHWH's kingship for the YHWH *malak* psalms is the prophecy of Second Isaiah, not the other way around.

As we have already seen, in the form-critical study of the Psalms Gunkel and Mowinckel observed a certain interrelationship between the YHWH *malak* psalms in Book IV and the eschatology of YHWH's kingship in Second Isaiah. In the form-critical study of the book of Isaiah, on the other hand, scholars have also noticed the interconnections of Second Isaiah to the psalms not merely in Book IV but also in Book III. One of the major contributions is the discernment of the 'setting in life' (*Sitz im Leben*) of the Isaianic message and the purpose for the origination of the message in relation to that social setting.

Second Isaiah's relationship with the psalms of Book III can be best depicted as the one responding to the other. The chief genres used in Second Isaiah are the liturgical poetry of Israel: laments and the concomitant oracles of salvation, thanksgiving hymns, Zion, and victory songs, among which individual laments are the most frequently used in the Psalter, particularly in Book III.²⁹ Second Isaiah makes extensive use of one element of such psalmic laments, the assurance of salvation, as a response to the despondent laments of the exilic community. J. Begrich found in Second Isaiah twenty-four such oracles through which the prophet was answering the exiles' laments.³⁰ C. Westermann was also aware of Second Isaiah's dialogue with the exilic lamentations, though he did not explicitly locate them in Book III.³¹ For both Begrich and Westermann the message of Second Isaiah is embedded in its exilic social setting and seeks to address the issues that concerned the Israelite audience during the fall of the nation.³²

Like two sides of a coin, form-critical scholars in the study of Second Isaiah also make similar observations as did Gunkel and Mowinckel concerning its interconnections to the psalms in Book IV. Besides the similar theological conceptions, Westermann pushed further to mention the lexemic affinities between them.³³ One important example is the cry, "the grass withers, the flower fades," in Is 40:7 in close affinity to Ps 90: 5–6. It proves the fact that the prophet and the psalmist shared the same diction of the time. The reason for such intimate association, Westermann inferred, was likely that the prophet of Second Isaiah "was in some way connected with the temple singers, who were the people principally in charge of the Psalter and its transmission."³⁴ The psalms were not in an isolated cultic milieu independent from the social setting, but rather embraced the heart of the Israelites. Since Second Isaiah also sought to address the life of his fellow Israelites, it is not difficult to explain why he would clothe his message in the same diction as the psalms in Book IV, the contemporaneous psalms.

In summary, form criticism well informs us of the theological and lexemic affinities between Second Isaiah and psalms in Book IV. It also illuminates our knowledge of the *Sitz im Leben* from which both materials arose. However, through his acute critical lens, Childs perceptively discerned that the weakness of form-critical scholarship lies in its atomization of the scriptural

²⁹ Richard J. Clifford, "Second Isaiah," *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, (III; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 496.

³⁰ Joachim Begrich, *Studien zu Deuterojesaja* (BWANT 77; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1938).

³¹ Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), 7.

³² The notion (both by Begrich and Westermann) of Second Isaiah responding the laments which arose during the exilic period is very insightful. However, their presumption that Second Isaiah was composed in Babylon and sought to preach to the exiles, to my judgment, needs further alteration. Aligned with Seitz, I am inclined to reckon Jerusalem as the geographical location where the composition of Second Isaiah was produced. Cf. Seitz, "Isaiah and Lamentations" in *Word Without End: The Old Testament as Abiding Theological Witness* (Waco: Baylor, 2004), 130–149.

³³ Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 8

³⁴ Ibid. Similar to Mowinckel's surmise.

books.³⁵ The messages developed and presented in the *final form* are thus often obscured and even lost. In reaction to this impasse, many scholars turn to the redactional-critical approach to the texts in order to discover new insights from the editing of a text as a whole.³⁶

3. Reading the Text through Its Compositional Development—Redaction-Critical Method.

The Psalter was traditionally treated as a mere collection of hymns and prayers loosely bound together without editorial unity and overall messages. In 1976, Joseph Brennan called for scholarly attention to the editorial purpose behind the Psalter.³⁷ “It is not enough to study each of its 150 components in the historical context from which it originally sprang. They must all be studied in their relationship to each other.”³⁸ Childs is also one of the forerunners who accentuated the canonical shaping of the Psalter. In his study of the Psalms, he contended that Ps 1 and 2 together form an introduction to the book of Psalms as a whole.³⁹ In addition to the introductory function of Ps 1 and 2, Childs emphasized as well the use of superscriptions in the study of the canonical shaping of the Psalter. Opposing the desertion of the psalm titles by the historical-critical scholars in the nineteenth century, he argued that in spite of being secondary additions, the superscriptions “represent an important reflection of how the psalms as a collection of sacred literature were understood and how this secondary setting became authoritative for the canonical tradition.”⁴⁰

In the past two decades or so, biblical scholars have given increasing attention to the shape and shaping of the Psalter. Wilson’s dissertation innovatively demonstrates the editorial principals behind the arrangement of the psalms in the Hebrew canonical form through parallel readings of the Mesopotamian and Qumran hymn collections.⁴¹ He contended that the editorial purpose of the Psalter was to help the exilic and post-exilic communities find a solution for the failure of the promised, eternal Davidic covenant. Many scholars, in the ensuing years, follow the lead of Wilson to rediscover other potential redactional frameworks of the Psalter.⁴²

³⁵ Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 324, 515.

³⁶ See, for example, Clements’s critique of atomization of the text under the form-critical inquiry and his proposal for the redactional approach. R. E. Clements, “Beyond Tradition-History: Deutero-Isaianic Development of First Isaiah’s Themes,” *JSOT* 31 (1985), 95–113.

³⁷ Cf. Wallace’s succinct survey of Brennan’s inaugural call to the study of the Psalter’s redaction. Wallace, *The Narrative Effect of Book IV*, 4.

³⁸ Joseph P. Brennan, “Some Hidden Harmonies of the Fifth Book of Psalms” in *Essays in Honor of Joseph P. Brennan* (ed. Robert F. McNamara; Rochester, NY: St Bernard’s Seminary, 1976), 127.

³⁹ Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 516.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 520.

⁴¹ Gerald H. Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (SBL Dissertation Series 76; ed. J. J. M. Roberts; Chico: Scholar Press, 1985).

⁴² Clinton McCann largely follows Wilson’s framework only with a few emendations. Cf. J. Clinton McCann, “Books I–III and the Editorial Purpose of the Hebrew Psalter,” in *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter* (JSOT Supp. 159; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 93–107. Nancy deClaisse-Walford also follows Wilson, suggesting that the central issue to the canonical shaping of the Psalter is concerned with how to deal with the loss of kingship in Israel. She opines that the Psalter is deeply imprinted with hermeneutical underpinning from the community that shaped the text into its final form. Its story plot clearly reveals the postexilic community’s quest for identity and stability. See deClaisse-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning*. E. Zenger advocates a wisdom framework of the Psalter. Cf. David Howard, “The Psalms and Current Study” in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches* (eds. Philip S. Johnston and David G. Firth; Leicester: Apollos, 2005), 24–6. David Mitchell contends for an eschatological programme in editing of the Psalter. Cf. David Mitchell, “The Hebrew Psalter,” in *The Message of the Psalter: An Eschatological Programme in the Book of Psalms* (JSOT Supp. 252; Sheffield: Sheffiel, 1997), pp. 66–89.

With increased interest in the role of the editors behind the formation of the book of Isaiah, the focus on the historical prophet Isaiah has moved to the backdrop. Scholars like Kaier, Clements, and Sweeney endeavour to separate various redactional levels by literary means and locate them with historical and sociological analysis, in order to reintegrate them and describe their present function in the final form of the text. In other words, the focus of the Isaianic research has ever since then experienced a paradigm shift from the *Sitz im Leben* to the *Sitz im Buch* of the text.⁴³

Jerome Creach's insightful essay, "The Shape of Book Four of the Psalter and the Shape of Second Isaiah,"⁴⁴ explores the lexical, theological, and structural parallels between these two distinct, yet corresponding units. Through his parallel reading of Second Isaiah and Book IV, Creach seeks to interpret the similarities in order to discern the relationship between the two books on the redactional level. He infers from the basis of lexical parallels that the materials in Second Isaiah and the psalms in Book IV were composed approximately in the same historical period, i.e. the exile. The theological similarities, on the other hand, demonstrate the same concerns embraced by both books—they both aim to address the trauma of exile. The affinities in shape, on the large scale, reveal some significant implications to the editorial relationship between Second Isaiah and Book IV. Creach argues that the final editor of Book IV took the shape after Second Isaiah.

The most obvious among the structural affinities between Second Isaiah and Book IV is the fact that both units near their beginning contrast the eternity of God and the ephemeralness of humanity. The analogy of humanity to 'grass' (*חַצִּיר*) occurs in Is 40 (vv. 6–8) and Ps 90 (vv. 5–6). It is also worth noting that at the end of the two units God's eternity is emphasized again (Is 55:11, God's word; Ps 106:45, God's steadfast love *ךְסָדֵךְ*). The second prominent example is the striking similarity in the appearance of the key word *נְחֹם*. The word occurs both in the beginning and the end of Second Isaiah (40:1, *piel* imperative; 54:11, *pual* participle) and Book IV (90:13, *niphal* imperative; 106:45, *niphal* imperfect). In Is 40:1 the prophet receives the divine commission to prophesy comfort to the people of Israel, announcing the end of the divine punishment. The beginning of Book IV (Ps 90:13), *נְחֹם* is uttered on the lips of Moses to request God to 'have compassion' upon his servants who were suffering. Interestingly enough, this word occurs both in the end of Second Isaiah (Is 54:11) and Book IV (Ps 106:45), again denoting 'comfort' and 'have compassion' respectively.

From Creach's structural analysis we have come to see the contrast between God's eternity and humankind's transience and the word *נְחֹם* both serve as *inclusio* encapsulating the two units. The affinities in shape between Second Isaiah and Book IV, for Creach, signify meaningful connections between the two texts on the editorial level. Given the very late date assigned to some psalms in Book IV (for example, Ps 90, 93 and 95 – 99), it is compelling for Creach to conclude that Book IV takes shape after Second Isaiah. The structural similarities and the relatively late dating of certain psalms in Book IV imply that "the editors of the Psalter had Second Isaiah as a model when ordering Psalms 90–106."⁴⁵

Creach's redactional-critical approach to Second Isaiah and Book IV indeed provides us acute observations on the structural affinities and editorial relationship between the two texts.⁴⁶ As we

⁴³ For further introductory survey of the redactional approaches to the Isaiah study, see Seitz, "First Isaiah," *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 476–7; Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 321.

⁴⁴ Jerome Creach, "The Shape of Book Four of the Psalter and the Shape of Second Isaiah," *JSOT* 80 (1998), 63–76.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁴⁶ For other researches on the redactional interrelationship between the Book of Isaiah and the Psalter, see Bernard Gossé, "le psaume 98 et la rédaction d'ensemble du livre d'Isaïe," *Biblische Notizen* 86 (1997), 29–30; *idem*, "l'é-

have hitherto journeyed through the modern history of critical research on the interrelationship between Second Isaiah and Book IV, however, we are still left to ask one more question: what is the parallel(s) between the two units in terms of the thematic development in their respective books (i.e. the Book of Isaiah and the Psalter as a whole)? To paraphrase the question, what are the similarities between the narrative effect of Second Isaiah and Book IV in their larger literary context? Can we still read the two units in parallel regarding their function in the progression of theme(s) in their canonical books? What is the interrelationship between Second Isaiah and Book IV on a canonical level?

4. Reading the Text in Its Canonical Context—Canonical Approach & the Driving Questions

The aforementioned questions precisely describe the point of departure for my inquiry. Redational-criticism helps us recognize that the literary presentation of a text is the product of many editorial hands through a long process of redaction. However, my interest lies in the features of a text in its *final form* and the narrative effects in its *canonical context*. In other words, my methodology is canonical.⁴⁷ For the inquiry of this paper, I will focus on how Second Isaiah and Book IV function in the thematic development of their respective canonical books, i.e. the book of Isaiah and the Psalter as a whole.⁴⁸

Based on the presumption that a ‘narrative impulse’ exists in the Psalter, Robert Wallace acutely discerns the canonical role of Book IV in the storyline of the Psalter.⁴⁹ He opines that “[t]he narrative effect of Book IV within the book of Psalms as reflected in the Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Psalter focuses the reader on Moses, Torah, and the *proper place for Yahweh* in the cosmos.”⁵⁰ He argues with Marvin Tate that Book IV is a ‘Moses book’ since the whole unit is encapsulated by Mosaic references, and allusions to Moses are scattered all over the psalms of Book IV.⁵¹ This Mosaic voice purports to speak with authority that YHWH is king. The interest in a Davidic kingly figure in Books I–III has shifted to the focus on YHWH as the king over Israel and all cosmos in Book IV.⁵² Therefore, Book IV functions as a critical point in the Psalter, transforming Israel’s laments over the loss of their dynastic kingship into a joyful praise of YHWH’s rule.

volution des rapports entre le salut (YŠW‘H) et le jugement (MŠPT), dans les rédactions d’ensemble du livre d’Isaïe et du psautier, et le rôle des cantiques bibliques,” *Revue Biblique* 109, 3 (2002).

⁴⁷ This term denotes Childs’s methodology introduced in his *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*; it has, however, nothing to do with the ‘canonization’ of the Hebrew Bible as Clements misunderstood. Cf. Clements’s footnote on his critique of Childs’ ‘canonical’ hermeneutics. Clements, “Beyond Tradition-History”, 112, n. 10.

⁴⁸ The canonical readings of Is 36–39 are successfully demonstrated by Peter Ackroyd and Seitz. Their canonical readings persuasively prove the *Sitz im Buch* of Is 36–39 significantly affect the development of themes from First Isaiah to Second Isaiah and display how these crucial four chapters greatly impact the interpretation of their proceeding and following texts. See Peter R. Ackroyd, “Isaiah 36–39: Structure and Function,” in *Studies in the Religious Tradition of the Old Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1987), 105–20; “The Death of Hezekiah: A Pointer to the Future?” *Ibid.*, 172–80. Seitz, *Zion’s Final Destiny: The Development of the Book of Isaiah: A Reassessment of Isaiah 36–39* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991).

⁴⁹ Robert E. Wallace, *The Narrative Effect of Book IV in the Psalter* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 1. Italic mine.

⁵¹ Marvin Tate, *Psalm 51–100* (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), xxvi.

⁵² Erich Zenger reads Book I–III as advocating a ‘messianic’ programme, which promotes the Davidic monarchy, and Books IV–V as advocating a ‘theocratic’ program, which promotes YHWH as king. Cf. E. Zenger, “The God of Israel’s Reign over the World (Psalms 90–106),” in *The God of Israel and the Nations: Studies in Isaiah and the Psalms*, (ed. Norbert Lohfink and Erich Zenger; trans. Everett R. Kalin; Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 161. In Zenger’s close reading of Ps 93–100, he also notices the semantic borrowings from Second Isaiah. Cf. *Ibid.*, 173–4.

My canonical reading of Second Isaiah parallels with Wallace's reading of Book IV. The servant in Second Isaiah (Is 49:1–6; 50:4–9; 52:13–53:12), albeit unnamed, does exhibits prominent features of Moses through the author's implicit and explicit allusions to Moses' accounts in the Pentateuch. This Moses-like servant performs the role as YHWH's salvific instrument to the people of Israel. Through the work of the servant, God's glory is witnessed and his kingship over Israel and the nations is acknowledged. As such, Second Isaiah in the context of the canonical book of Isaiah, analogous to Book IV in the Psalter, also serves as a critical point in the thematic development of the book. The intensive enthusiasm about a messianic king in First Isaiah has turned to YHWH as the ultimate king in the cosmos.

The first 39 chapters of the book of Isaiah exhibit an enthusiastic interest in a kingly figure who will come to restore the nation of Israel. G. von Rad pointed out that the theme of David and the Messiah is expounded in considerable scope and importance in First Isaiah, apart from the theme of Zion.⁵³ However, through a careful reading of chs. 40ff., one will not have difficulty noticing the apparent absence of the messianic theme. What happened exactly to this messianic hope? This question has long puzzled critical scholars and in turn compelled them to account for this mystery.

Scholars who regard the book of Isaiah as comprised of three discrete, unrelated books are naturally not bothered by this question. For them, the three parts arose from different historical periods, addressing to different contexts, and therefore should be studied in isolation from one another. The disappearance of messianic hopes in Second Isaiah, as a corollary, is merely a matter of discontinuity resulted from different theological outlooks held by different authors.

However, scholars who seek to read the book of Isaiah as a unity feel obliged to trace the development of the messianic theme throughout the book as a whole. Many explanations have been offered to account for this seeming discontinuity. A. Laato argues that Cyrus has taken up the role as the Messiah.⁵⁴ The majority of scholars, e.g. Westermann, D. Meade, J. Blenkinsopp, to name but a few, contend that the Davidic king in relation to Israel in chs. 1–39 has been 'democratized' in chs. 40ff. to Israel in relation to the nations as a whole.⁵⁵ Extending the transferral even further to the suffering servant, H. Williamson claims that the Davidic role has not only been 'democratized' to Israel but later 'privatized' to the servant since this individual ideal servant has taken over the missions of the corporate servant, i.e. Israel the nation.⁵⁶

What happened to the messianic vision in Second Isaiah? The aforementioned speculations—mere discontinuity or transferral to Cyrus, to the people of Israel, or to the suffering servant—do

⁵³ Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology: The Theology of Israel's Historical Traditions* (vol. 1; trans. by D. M. G. Stalker; London: Oliver & Boyd, 1962), 169.

⁵⁴ Antti Laato, *The Servant of YHWH and Cyrus: A Reinterpretation of the Exilic Messianic Programme in Isaiah 40–55* (Stockholm, Sweden: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1992). Laato asserts that the messianic ideology is still working in Second Isaiah. Many of the traditio-historical motifs used in the Cyrus proclamation are linked with the Old Testament royal ideology. He draws extra-biblical parallels, e.g. the Akkadian royal inscriptions to the Cyrus passages, to support the messianic ideology at work behind the composition of the Cyrus passages and thus attempts to reconstruct a royal image for him.

⁵⁵ David Meade, *Pseudonymity and Canon* (Tubingen: Mohr, 1986), 34; Creach, "The Shape of Book Four of the Psalter and the Psalter", 72–73; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 370; Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 283–84; H. G. M. Williamson, *Variations on a Theme: King, Messiah and Servant in the Book of Isaiah* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1998), 120.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 165–6. See also Laato, *The Servant of YHWH and Cyrus*, 47–68. Laato seeks to demonstrate the servant's possessing of the royal attributes: the servant passages are re-actualizations or re-compositions of material from an older royal tradition.

not seem to be satisfactory.⁵⁷ Aligned with Seitz, I propose that a parallel reading of the development of the royal theology in the Psalter provides fruitful insights. In the following sections, we will examine the transition from First Isaiah to Second Isaiah concerning the messianic hopes in light of the transition from Books I–III to Book IV. Such parallel reading will lead to the conclusion that the absence of the messianic hopes in Second Isaiah denotes a shift in Israel's focus from the Davidic king to YHWH's ultimate kingship. The individual servant, on the other hand, does not appropriate the kingship, but rather possesses Moses-like characteristics. With the prominent role of the Moses-like servant, I suggest that Second Isaiah, as does Book IV, manifests a renewed interest in the figure of Moses against of the backdrop of the exile at the dawn of a new exodus.

III. THE NARRATIVE OF THE PSALTER

1. A Story Running Through Book I to Book V

To facilitate the comparison of the narrative effect of Second Isaiah to that of Book IV, a brief delineation of the Psalter's storyline is fundamental for our inquiry. The Psalter's storyline will illuminate how Second Isaiah parallels Book IV in its thematic development within the canonical context. As mentioned previously, during the recent two decades or so scholars have devoted much endeavour to the shape and shaping of the Psalter. By means of micro-structural scrutiny of lexemic and thematic connections between the adjacent psalms, on the one hand, and macro-canonical analysis of the overall thematic development through the five books, on the other hand, the Psalter clearly demonstrates deducible editorial purposes behind the whole collection.

In the examination of the Psalter's narrative plot, a pivotal point is found at the turn of Book IV. Arguing that Book IV functioned as the 'editorial heart' in the narrative of the Psalter, Wilson was the first among scholars who discerned distinctions between Books I–III and Books IV–V based on editorial devices as well as variations of content.⁵⁸ Viewing from editorial techniques, Books I–III contain more superscriptions than do Books IV–V, and the 'royal psalms' are purposefully placed at the 'seams' of Books I–III (Ps 2, 72, 89). In the content, the most noticeable feature of Books I–III pertains to the intensive interest in David or the Davidic covenant.⁵⁹ Generally speaking, the high Davidic content characteristic of Books I–III represents a purposeful editorial 'grouping' which contrasts the content of Book IV.

Having noted the distinctions between Books I–III and Books IV–V, I shall proceed to give a succinct account of the Psalter's storyline. N. DeClaissé-Walford stresses that in order to comprehend the story of the Psalter the reader/hearer must travel through the history of ancient Israel.⁶⁰ In other words, the Hebrew Psalter tells a story from the rise of ancient Israel under the leadership of Kings David and Solomon (Books I–II), to the demise of the nation after the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile (Book III), culminating with the return to the land and the time when YHWH would restore the fortunes of his people (Book IV–V).⁶¹

⁵⁷ In section IV and V of this paper, I will argue in detail against these speculations.

⁵⁸ Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, 199–288.

⁵⁹ Books I and II contain a large amount of Davidic psalms, psalms that are attributed to David. In Book I, 39 out of 41 psalms are ascribed to David, while Book II includes 18 (out of 31). Book III, though has only one ascription to David (out of 17), 15 psalms are ascribed to Asaph and Korah, the cult musicians in David's court. Moreover, the central concern of Book III pertains to the failure of the Davidic covenant expressed by the lamentations. For detailed statistic data of the superscriptions, see deClasse-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning*, 97.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 103.

⁶¹ Ibid., 34.

Book I primarily comprises psalms of David most of which are individual or communal laments.⁶² From these psalms we read David's assurance of God's faithful preservation under all kinds of difficult circumstances. The proclamation of YHWH's special covenant with his king in Ps 2 is well matched by the psalms in Book I. The firm security and identity of Israel, embodied in David's faith, culminates in the conclusion of Ps 41—"You will support me because of my integrity, and let me abide in Your presence forever. Blessed is YHWH, God of Israel!" (41:13–14a). Book II continues the same confidence in YHWH's covenant. In the concluding psalm of Book II (Ps 72) David prays for his son Solomon,⁶³ reminiscent of the covenant YHWH made with the former in 2 Sam 7 and renewed with the latter in 1 Kg 9:5.

As we come to Book III, the readers soon notice the drastic change both in the psalms' titles and genre. With the close of Book II, David moves to the background. The focus is now on David's descendants.⁶⁴ Book III opens with Ps 73 which Walter Brueggemann reckons as signifying the beginning of a shift in Israel's faith journey.⁶⁵ Indeed, Israel's naïve faith in YHWH is experiencing a stage of disorientation in Book III. The confidence in YHWH's law and covenant is disrupted by the failure of the dynasty. The struggle between faith and despair permeates everywhere in the book, culminating in the cry of lament in Ps 88 and 89.⁶⁶ Ps 88, depicted by David Howard, is the 'bleakest' of the laments, lacking any clear expression of trust in YHWH or vows to praise.⁶⁷ Ps 89, though a royal psalm, is very different from the other psalms of the same genre. The Davidic covenant is strongly affirmed, but it is seen as being in the distant past and having been broken.⁶⁸ The psalmist pleads with YHWH to be faithful to the covenant with David, as with Ps 88, without an expression of confidence in God that is normally found in the psalms of lament.

The ethos of lament and bewailing is transformed dramatically as we come to Book IV. As mentioned previously, Book IV performs as the editorial center of the Psalter. Encapsulated by two Mosaic psalms (Ps 90 and 106) as the bookends, Book IV centers praises of YHWH's kingship.⁶⁹ Israel's focus on the human king in Books I–III is reoriented onto the ultimate kingship of YHWH over Israel and the world. The figure of David recedes even further, giving the preeminence to Moses. I will examine closely in point 2 how these themes are developed in Book IV.

After reorienting Israel's focus to YHWH the king, David comes on the scene again in Book

⁶² Book I commences with Ps 3. Ps 1 and 2 function as an introduction to the Psalter as a whole. For the debate over whether Ps 2 serves as part of the introduction (one composition with or separate composition from Ps 1) or the first psalm of Book I, see Wilson, *Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, 205; deClaissé-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning*, 38–41; Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 516; Wallace, *Narrative Effect of Book IV*, 4–5.

⁶³ Childs read the preposition **בְּ** as 'for' instead the traditional rendering 'of,' making the psalm David's prayer for Solomon rather than Solomon's. cf. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 516.

⁶⁴ The predominant psalms are psalms of community, rather than individual. For discussion on the psalms' genre and titles of Book III, cf. deClaissé-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning*, 73–80.

⁶⁵ Walter Brueggemann, "Bounded by Obedience and Praise," in *The Psalms and the Life of Faith* (ed. Patrick D. Miller; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 206.

⁶⁶ McCann correctly emphasizes that the psalms in Book III reveal Israel's struggle between YHWH's covenant and the apparent failure in reality, instead of stressing the total disillusion of Davidic hope (as Wilson). McCann, "Books I – III and the Editorial Purpose of the Hebrew Psalter."

⁶⁷ David M. Howard, "A Contextual Reading of Psalm 90–94," in *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter* (JSOT Supp. 159; Sheffield: Sheffield, 1993), 110.

⁶⁸ Wilson, *Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, 109.

⁶⁹ Scholars have long recognized the Mosaic psalms at the edges of Book IV forming an *inclusio*. For example, Howard, "A Contextual Reading of Psalm 90–94," 109; Wallace, *Narrative Effect of Book IV*, 80–83; Zenger, "The God of Israel's Reign over the World," 163.

V.⁷⁰ The reappearance of David does not, however, denote that Israel's focus is reversed back onto the human king as in Books I–III. While it is true that David's presence in Book V strongly reflects the messianic hope held by the post-exilic community, this hope nevertheless has integrated a proper understanding of YHWH's sovereignty in the political life of Israel, namely, he is the ultimate king.⁷¹ Wilson perceptively reckoned the role of David in Book V as modeling the attitude of reliance and trust in YHWH.⁷² When hopes of fulfillment of the promise seem forever lost, if David can remember and praise God and pass that memory along, then all Israel can and must do the same. In Book V David is shaped by the perspective of Book IV, which leads to a transformed understanding of the Davidic covenant—a conditional covenant—"If your sons keep my covenant and my decrees...then their sons also shall sit upon your throne forevermore" (Ps 132:12).⁷³ It is a David whose power is not absolute, and whose throne and progeny are not certain. It is a David who begins to sing like Moses about humanity's ephemeralness (Ps 90:9; 144:4). It is a David who endorses the acclamation—"Hallelujah, YHWH reigns!" (cf. Ps 146 – 150)

2. The Narrative Effect of Book IV in the Psalter

Book IV is characterized by frequent allusions to Moses.⁷⁴ As Zenger poignantly points out, Book IV has a Moses dimension that distinguishes it from the other psalm books to the extent that "the composition of Ps 90–106 is Pentateuch-oriented, that is, Moses-oriented."⁷⁵ At the outset of the book we hear Moses, the man of God, praying for the suffering people of Israel (Ps 90). McCann comments that the laments over the failure of the monarchy in Book III reflect in a poetic way the actual failure of the Davidic line at the exile and dispersion of 587 BCE.⁷⁶ In the critical juncture at the close of Book III and the opening of Book IV, Ps 90 offers a response to the failure of the Davidic monarchy articulated in Ps 88–89. B. Tanner rightly explains that the reason for such a strong emphasis on Moses in the beginning of Book IV as well as the entire book pertains to the historical setting of the exile during the composition. Because the exile represents a new wilderness—no land, no temple, no monarchy—" [the] Mosaic prayer illustrative of Israel's wilderness experience would have special pertinence and power in

⁷⁰ There are two groups of Davidic psalms in Book V: Ps 108–110, 138–140.

⁷¹ Wilson, "King, Messiah, and the Reign of God: Revisiting the Royal Psalms and the Shape of the Psalter," in *The Book of Psalms: Composition & Reception* (eds. Peter Flint and Patrick Miller; Boston: Brills, 2005), 400–404.

Wilson contended for a general development of the kingship theme in the Hebrew Psalter, i.e. a shift from human kingship to the kingship of YHWH. Many scholars criticized that Wilson's reading tended to undermine a supposed messianic reading of the royal psalms. In response to the critique, Wilson correctly defended that the shifting of the focus from the human Davidic kingship to that of YHWH does not contradict, or undermine, the messianic hope of the post-exilic community. But rather, it does signify the urgency to remind the post-imperial Israel of her God and his sovereignty over his people and the whole world. "It would have been incredibly difficult for the diaspora community with its long identification with the Davidic monarchy to disassociate David and his descendants from kingship entirely." Cf. Ibid., 404.

⁷² Wilson, *Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, 221, 227; deClasse-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning*, 98–99.

⁷³ Wallace, *The Narrative Effect of Book IV*, 84.

⁷⁴ Apart from numerous implicit adumbrations of Moses' accounts in the Pentateuch, Moses' name appears seven times in Book IV.

⁷⁵ Zenger, "The God of Israel's Reign over the World," 165.

⁷⁶ McCann, "Books I–III and the Editorial Purpose of the Hebrew Psalter," 96; recently Beth Tanner also makes the same observation, see Beth LaNel Tanner, *The Book of Psalms Through the Lens of Intertextuality* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 98.

addressing the situation of exile.”⁷⁷ Thus Moses’ prayer serves as a reminder that YHWH’s covenantal activity extends back not merely to David, but as far back to Moses.⁷⁸

Zenger reads Ps 90–92 as a unit based on their thematic unity and common connections to the exodus experience recorded in Ex 32 and Deut 32–33.⁷⁹ For example, both in Ps 90:13 and Ex 32:12, Moses intercedes for the people in the same language, as he pleads to YHWH (*nhm* and *šwb*). The *nhm* of YHWH in both cases is associated with the end of the desperate situation of divine punishment, for Ps 90 the exile, and for Ex 32 the golden calf incident.⁸⁰ Ps 90 at the outset of Book IV explicitly attributes the prayer to Moses, drawing the reader to the days when Moses gave an address after the golden calf incident (Ex 32), and when he, being called the man of God, gave the final blessing to the Israelites (Deut 33). Ps 91 “reminds post-exilic Israel that although they had suffered the fate which Moses foretold, they could find refuge and security by trusting in YHWH.”⁸¹ Ps 92 serves as the conclusion of the unit by offering thanksgiving to YHWH for his answering.⁸²

Wallace well summarizes the narrative effect of Ps 90–92 in the context of the Psalter that “[t]he questioning despair of Book III has been refocused to the remembrance of Moses and of the Mosaic Covenant...”⁸³ The unity of Ps 90–92 with the emphasis on Moses, therefore, makes the vision of Book IV stand under the Mosaic authority.⁸⁴ It reorients the audience, who were faced with despair at the fall of the Davidic monarchy, to refocus on YHWH’s faithfulness experienced by their ancestors during the era of Moses.

After the three Mosaic psalms as the introduction, we come to the centre of Book IV—the YHWH *malak* psalms (Ps 93–100).⁸⁵ Generally speaking, the main feature of the YHWH *malak* psalms is the universal reign of YHWH which consists primarily in the realization of justice (*mšpt*) in the sense of a just and life-affirming world order.⁸⁶ The theme of YHWH as king in Ps 93–95 is tightly intertwined with Mosaic tradition, which serves as a link to the Mosaic opening (Ps 90 – 92).⁸⁷ Wallace observantly points out the significance of the Mosaic tradition in the vision of YHWH’s reign. He suggests that following the time of exile and the fall of the Davidic

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Howard, “A Contextual Reading of Psalm 90–94”, 110.

⁷⁹ Zenger, “The God of Israel’s Reign,” 167–8. Wallace also makes similar observations; cf. Idem, *Narrative Effect of Book IV*, 18–29. Both Zenger and Wallace carefully recognize lexical and thematic connections of Ps 90–92 to Ex 15 and Deut 32–33, e.g. Ps 90:13 and Deut 32:36; Ps 90:1 and Deut 32:27, 33:27; Ps 90:16 and Deut 32:4; Ps 93:4 and Ex 15:10; Ps 93:5 and Ex 15:13. Cf. Zenger, “The God of Israel’s Reign,” 166; Wallace, *Narrative Effect*, 19–20, 38.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 19.

⁸¹ Ibid., 30.

⁸² If we take Ps 90 and 91:1 – 13 as Moses’ prayer and blessing, 91:14–16 can be seen as YHWH’s response to the preceding prayer.

⁸³ Ibid., 89.

⁸⁴ Zenger, “The God of Israel’s Reign,” 166.

⁸⁵ Many scholars agree that Ps 93–100 are the thematic centre not only of Book IV but also of the entire Psalter.

James Mays regards YHWH *malak* is the ‘root metaphor’ for the Psalter. Idem, *The Lord Reigns: A Theological Handbook to the Psalms* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 12–13. Concerning the genre of the YHWH *malak* psalms, according to J. D. W. Watts, what defines the psalm a YHWH *malak* psalms is the “words showing characteristic acts of YHWH, including creating, making, establishing, sitting, doing wonders, judging, doing righteous acts and saving.” See Idem, “Yahweh *Mālak* Psalms,” *TZ* 21 (1965), 341–48.

⁸⁶ Zenger, “The God of Israel’s Reign,” 169.

⁸⁷ For example, Ps 93:4–5 has lexical connections with Ex 15: 10, 13 (mighty waters, holiness); Ps 94 has allusions to Deut 32–33 (God of vengeance); Ps 95:8–11 explicitly reminds of the exodus history under Moses’ leadership (the incidences at Meribah and Massah, cf. Deut 33:8).

covenant, the people need a new beginning—a new exodus. Ps 93 reminds the reader that YHWH can bring such new beginning through new creation.⁸⁸ Ps 95 shows that Moses' (and his generation's) failure to follow YHWH's instruction cost him the ability to finish the journey with his people and enter the Promised Land. If a new exodus is to begin, it is important to learn the lesson of the old one.⁸⁹

The theme of YHWH as king over all the earth dominates the story of Ps 96–100. The psalmists exclaim, “YHWH is king!” (97:1) He rules in Zion with justice and righteousness (99:2–4). When Zion hears this good news, she gladly rejoices (cf. 97:8; 99:2). Not only does he rule over Israel, his sovereignty is high above the idols—“he is to be revered above all gods,” (96:4b) “all worshipers of images are put to shame, those who make their boast in worthless idols; all gods bow down before him” (97:7). Gunkel and Mowinckel, as previously mentioned, followed by many other scholars, have emphasized the lexical and thematic parallels to Is 40–55.⁹⁰ For example, both Ps 96 and 98, in dependence on Second Isaiah and in similar language, establish *how* the nations come to the understanding of YHWH's salvation for Israel and his kingship over the nations.⁹¹ When this happens, the world will be wonderfully transformed. The cosmic imageries employed in the YHWH *malak* psalms are clearly drawn from Second Isaiah, which implies that the former were in some measure indebted to latter.⁹²

Not only were the psalms inspired by Second Isaiah, they also fulfill the prophet's calls. One notable example is found in the call for a new song to YHWH. As the prophet calls, “Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise from the ends of the earth,” (Is 42:10) in celebration of the new thing ordained by YHWH (cf. Isa. 43:19), the psalmist sings, “O sing to the Lord a new song for he has done marvellous things!” (Ps 98:1; cf. 96:1). The psalms are responses to the Isaianic calls. With such a dialogic relationship, the YHWH *malak* psalms and Second Isaiah both provide a lyrical presentation of an exile people searching for refuge. They both found refuge in YHWH's sovereignty and a hope in a new exodus.⁹³ The section of YHWH *malak* psalms finally culminates in Ps 100 which calls Israel and the nations to the common acknowledgement of YHWH's reign over the world. It places the covenant formula (v.3) into the mouth of the nations as a confession of their new relationship with God.⁹⁴

Ps 101–106 are symmetric to Ps 90–92 in the sense that they also contain numerous Mosaic allusions.⁹⁵ The two ends of Book IV together serve as a frame around the YHWH *malak* psalms. Although David reappears in Ps 101–103 as the psalmist,⁹⁶ his role has entirely changed. He is no longer the object of the songs, speaking as an authoritative figure, but rather as a fellow

⁸⁸ Wallace, *Narrative Effect*, 38.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 44.

⁹⁰ Apart from the aforementioned scholars, Gunkel, Monwickel, and Westermann, other scholars in Psalms study: M. Dahood, *Psalms II: 51–100* (AB 16; eds. W. F. Albright and David Freedman; New York: Doubleday, 1968), 357; H. J. Kraus, *Psalms 60–150* (trans. H. C. Oswald; Minneapolis, Augsburg Publishing House, 1993), 90–91; Watts, “Yahweh *Malak* Psalms,” 341–348; Wallace, *Narrative Effect*, 44.

⁹¹ Zenger, “The God of Israel's Reign,” 173.

⁹² Mowinckel and Westermann argued the other way around, i.e. the prophet's oracle was inspired by the psalms used in the cult. See Section II of this paper: Form-critical approach. Other imagery parallels, see Is 44:23; 49:13; 55:12.

⁹³ Wallace, *Narrative Effect*, 44.

⁹⁴ Zenger, “The God of Israel's Reign,” 178.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 180;

⁹⁶ Unlike Ps 101 and 103, Ps 102 has no superscription indicating the Davidic authorship. However, due to the close lexemic connections and the positional vicinity to Ps 101, the psalm can be read as continuation of Ps 101, and thus can be read as Davidic psalms. Wallace, *Narrative Effect*, 61–62.

sufferer who turns to Moses and the Torah in the search of God's presence (Ps 103:7, 18). Wallace suggests that the Mosaic Covenant is the prior subject of Ps 101–103. David becomes a role model for the Israelites in exile. "Davidic sanction of Moses' primacy as prophet and of Mosaic Covenant as the means of salvation provides the reader with the answer to the question, 'But what would David say to all this?'"⁹⁷

Ps 104–106 as an editorial unit is apparent because they all end with the doxological refrain, "Hallelujah!"⁹⁸ The three psalms function literally as a concluding group at the end of Book IV. Ps 104 re-emphasizes YHWH as the creator and king over all creation clothed with honour, majesty, and wisdom, echoing the royal theme of Ps 93–100. It reminds the audience that humanity is not the king of creation, but a part of it. The anthropocentric view of creation found in Ps 8 has been replaced by an 'ecocentric' outlook.⁹⁹ In Ps 101–103 we have seen the shift of the Psalter's focus from the Davidic Covenant to the Mosaic Covenant. In Ps 105, the focusing away from David is rendered even more explicit. Abraham and Moses are honoured as YHWH's servants (vv. 26, 42). The Davidic Covenant is not heard, and instead, the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants are alluded to and interwoven in v. 45. Moreover, the term **מַשְׁמִיכָה** (my anointed ones; v.15), which is so often associated with David, is now applied to the patriarchs. Ps 106, the other side of Ps 105's exodus story,¹⁰⁰ continues a diminishing status for David at the end of Book IV. At the conclusion of Book IV, the Davidic theology is subsumed, and the Mosaic emphasis is in view.¹⁰¹

The reiteration of YHWH's kingship and strong Mosaic emphasis at the end of Book IV highlight the pivotal point in the Psalter's narrative.¹⁰² Wallace well summarizes the narrative effect of Book IV in the Hebrew Psalter that, "[t]he story of Book IV has also seen a growth in the faith expressed in the Psalter. Where Book III ends with questions about the Davidic Covenant, Book IV ends with a de-emphasis on the Davidic Covenant. Where Book III struggles with questions: 'Where is your steadfast love? (Ps 89:49), Book IV has provided answers: 'YHWH is king.'"¹⁰³

Book IV not merely sets right YHWH's relationship with Israel and his sovereign place in the universe, it also provides a vision for the relationship between Israel and the nations, a vision that is also envisaged by Second Isaiah (also cf. Is 2:1–5). On the one hand, the reign of YHWH has chosen Zion to work 'saving deeds' in the midst of the people of Israel. On the other hand, he also 'lures' the nations from Zion into his covenant of peace. Under YHWH's universal rule, Israel and the nations will live peacefully with one another because they both stand on the common truth—YHWH alone is God.¹⁰⁴

IV. THE MOSES-LIKE SERVANT IN SECOND ISAIAH

A canonical approach to the text, as Childs stressed, does not assume that a reconstruction of the historical stage is essential to a correct interpretation. Rather, it focuses to do justice to the 'logic'

⁹⁷ Ibid., 68.

⁹⁸ Wilson called this unit an "explicit example of editorial activity." Idem, *Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, 182–197.

⁹⁹ William Brown, *Seeing the Psalms: A Theology of Metaphor* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 158.

¹⁰⁰ In essence, Ps 105 and 106 are two sides of the same story, just as Ps 77 and 78. The exodus story is recalled by means of a hymn and lament respectively. Wallace, *Narrative Effect*, 80.

¹⁰¹ Tate, *Psalm 51–100*, xxvi.

¹⁰² The name Moses is mentioned eight times in the Psalter among which four occurrences are in Ps 105 and 106.

¹⁰³ Wallace, *Narrative Effect*, 83.

¹⁰⁴ Zenger, "The God of Israel's Reign," 190.

of the material in its canonical context.¹⁰⁵ As we have seen in last section, a canonical reading of Book IV reveals its narrative effect as a turning point in the context of the Hebrew Psalter. The questioning despair of Book III has been reoriented to the remembrances of Moses and a growing recognition of YHWH's kingship.¹⁰⁶ The focus on the Mosaic covenant sets aside the Davidic covenant. David no longer rules, but YHWH reigns!

A canonical reading of Second Isaiah reflects narrative effects in the book of Isaiah analogous to that of Book IV in the Psalter. The hope for a new exodus in both texts centres around a Mosaic figure and the leadership of YHWH. Book IV forthrightly quotes the intercession of Moses the authoritative psalmist for the people of Israel; Second Isaiah presents a suffering servant whose mission and legacy are highly reminiscent of Moses.

The word servant occurs twenty times in Second Isaiah. There is consensus that thirteen of the occurrences refer to Israel as the servant. The remaining seven occur in 42:1–4; 49:1–6; 50:4–9; and 52:13–53:12, which were singled out and designated by Duhm as ‘the servant songs’.¹⁰⁷ Duhm’s temporal-literary analysis led him to isolate the four texts and declare them to belong to a cycle. Duhm argued that the servant depicted in the cycle was an individual servant strictly different from the presentation of Israel as servant on theological grounds.¹⁰⁸ Later formal criticism did not undermine but rather in fact strengthened the notion of the four servant songs in a cycle.¹⁰⁹ This assumption pioneered by Duhm was followed by several generations until recently it was challenged by critical scholars, such as P. Wilcox, D. Paton-Williams, and Seitz, who air observations derived from close analysis of the literary logic of Second Isaiah and the canonical context of the four units.¹¹⁰

Based on the thematic development from Is chs. 40–48 to chs. 49–55 and the contrasts between the two halves, Wilcox and Paton-Williams have convincingly argued for a broken cycle of the four servant songs, i.e. the first song (42:1–4) should be taken off from the cycle, making the other three form a integral portrait of the individual servant.¹¹¹ Seitz also echoes that the distinction between the two servants in Second Isaiah, i.e. Israel/Jacob and the ideal servant, does not fall along the lines of four servant songs over against all other texts where the servant is mentioned. Instead, the main axis of differentiation falls along the line of the transition from chs. 40–48 to 49–55.¹¹² These three scholars do not arbitrarily isolate the songs from their canonical context, but rather, they seek to do justice to the songs’ narrative logic in the storyline of Second

¹⁰⁵ Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, 377.

¹⁰⁶ Wallace, *Narrative Effect*, 89.

¹⁰⁷ Clifford, “Second Isaiah,” 499.

¹⁰⁸ For more discussion on the temporal-literary approach to the servant songs, see Seitz, “‘You are my Servant, You are the Israel in whom I will be glorified’: The Servant Songs and the Effect of Literary Context in Isaiah,” in *Calvin Theological Journal* 39/1 (2004), 120.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. See also Westermann, *Isaiah 40 – 66*, 29. Westermann accepted the notion that the four servant songs represent a separate strand and form a subsequent addition to the book. He contended that the four units, of which the first three were written by the prophet himself and the last by others, were later insertions, but the reason why they were inserted where they are is obscure (except the fourth one as conclusion of the Second Isaiah). The formal analysis, however, rejects the generic classification of the four units as ‘songs’. None of these poems are actually songs. The formal inconsistency demonstrated in the four units makes the form critics reluctant to classify them into one genre. See Seitz, “You are my Servant,” 120–121.

¹¹⁰ Peter Wilcox and David Paton-Williams, “The Servant Songs in Deutero-Isaiah,” *JSOT* 42 (1988), 79–102; Seitz, “You are my Servant,” 122–124..

¹¹¹ Wilcox and Paton-Williams contend that the interpretation of the servant songs should follow the thematic transition between chs. 40–48 and 49–55. In chs. 40–48 the servant is identified with Israel/Jacob, but after 49:1ff. it is the prophet who lies behind the figure of the servant.

¹¹² Seitz, “You are my Servant,” 123.

Isaiah as a whole. In this paper, I shall adopt this view, treating 49:1–6; 50:4–9, and 52:13–53:12 as constitutive of the portrait of the individual servant, while leaving 42:1–4 off the cycle.

Endeavouring to account for the thematic continuity between First Isaiah and Second Isaiah, Williamson argued that the royal theme is the thread that runs through the Messianic figure in First Isaiah to the corporate servant of Israel and the individual servant in Second Isaiah.¹¹³ In his effort to bridge between the Davidic messiah and the servant, Williamson is compelled, on the one hand, to stress David's title as YHWH's servant, and on the other hand, to describe royal traits in the servant as much as possible. The overall results, to my judgment, are not very convincing. Firstly, the title, the servant of YHWH, does not uniquely belong to David. In fact, W. Zimmerli and J. Jeremias have comprehensively listed out many other figures titled the servant of YHWH in the Hebrew Scripture.¹¹⁴ It is true that, along with Moses, David is frequently described as YHWH's servant,¹¹⁵ but this fact cannot exclusively argue for any Davidic allusion in that title. Secondly, the Messiah is presented as a figure too different from the portrait of the servant to argue for any redactional effort in uniting them.¹¹⁶

Therefore, as opposed to Williamson, the unity between First Isaiah and Second Isaiah does not lie in the continuity between the messianic figure and the suffering servant. Rather, in the light of Book IV of the Psalter, I shall argue that the unity between First Isaiah and Second Isaiah does lie in the royal theme, but its focus is shifted from the Davidic dynasty to YHWH's universal kingship. Then, we might ask, "What is the role of the servant, especially when he is depicted with numerous Mosaic allusions, in the canonical context of Second Isaiah?" I suggest that Book IV can also provide us with valuable insights. The profuseness of Mosaic allusions in the portrayal of the individual servant parallels the vigorous interest in the figure and authority of Moses in Book IV. This reminiscence of Moses might well have to do with Israel's self-understanding during the exile analogous to the time of Moses when the nation was not centred around a autonomous dynasty. The robust hope for a new exodus also vibrantly catalyzes the memory of Moses who is tightly associated with the old exodus.

The observation that the individual servant possesses clear Mosaic traits is not a new one. A text in the Babylonian Talmud shows that Jewish tradition was familiar with the identification of the servant with Moses.¹¹⁷ In modern critical scholarship, it may be traced back as early as J. Fischer (1916).¹¹⁸ G. von Rad through his traditio-historical analysis noted that the Moses tradition is the primary tradition which Second Isaiah employed to depict the servant.¹¹⁹ He contended that the servant especially shows resemblance to the Moses represented in Deuteronomy. Von Rad was cautious in that he did not try to identify the servant with Moses but rather a prophet 'like Moses'. For von Rad, who was preoccupied with interest in the pre-history of the text, the affinities of the servant in Second Isaiah and Moses in Deuteronomy signify a

¹¹³ Williamson, *Variations on a Theme*, 128–166. I. Engnell had also argued for the royal identity of the Servant by interpreting the servant songs within a mythical pattern of the death and rebirth of a divine king. His alleged ancient Near East parallels evoked much debate and soon dissolved under close scrutiny. See Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 322.

¹¹⁴ W. Zimmerli and J. Jeremias, *The Servant of God* (London: SCM Press, 1957), 18–23. These figures include: the patriarchs, Moses, David, foreign kings, prophets, Job, and the suffering servant in Second Isaiah.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. 40 times in the Masoretic text the name of servant is given to Moses (especially emphasized in Num 12:7 and Ex 14:31). David in the Deuteronomic history is described as YHWH's servant frequently because he is reckoned as the king *par excellence* (cf. 1 Kgs 11:34). See also von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 261, n. 42.

¹¹⁶ Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 335.

¹¹⁷ Klaus Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah: A Commentary on Isaiah 40–55* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 20 and n. 108.

¹¹⁸ Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 261, n. 43.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 261.

close relationship in the formation of the two texts. Assuming Second Isaiah and Deuteronomy were written around the same historical period during the exile, he claimed that it was very probable that both texts used the same existing Moses tradition which looked for a prophet like Moses who would come to fulfill the task of a mediator between God and the people.¹²⁰

K. Baltzer has further developed von Rad's formal analysis of the Moses tradition behind the servant's portrait. Although his identification of the servant with Moses appears to be arbitrary and lacks substantiation from the text,¹²¹ Baltzer's thorough and acute formal observations of the Mosaic allusions in the depiction of the servant nevertheless merit our attention. In the ensuing reading of the servant texts, we will borrow many of Baltzer's insightful analyses to see the correlations between the servant and Moses, without abruptly equating the two. It is worth mentioning that the presumption which leads Baltzer to identify the servant directly with Moses is his recognition of the *Sitz im Leben* (cultic function) of Second Isaiah.¹²² Through comparisons with the Egyptian and Babylonian religions which had liturgical dramas performed during cultic festivals, Baltzer found alleged parallels between Second Isaiah and those dramas, claiming it to have been performed during the Passover/Mazzot festival that commemorated the exodus.

Baltzer contends that the servant texts, with a whole series of signals that are intended to point to Moses, are to be deemed as the Moses 'memorial' in the drama.¹²³ Thus the four servant songs record stages of Moses' life: the rise, work, death and burial. Taking the traditional cycle of four servant songs, Baltzer reads the first song (42:1–4) in parallel with the appointment of Moses in Ex 3. The second servant text (48:16–49:12),¹²⁴ containing intensive exodus allusions, serves as a reminder of the proclamation of the Decalogue on Sinai. The third servant text (50:4–9) presents the servant as a teacher and disciple (*lmd*; to teach, to be taught). This is highly reminiscent of the way Moses is described in Deuteronomy. The last servant song (52:13–53:12) is an interpretation of Deuteronomy 34, the farewell speech of Moses. In summary, Baltzer takes the four songs to represent four stages in the life of Moses, the first two songs taken from the book of Exodus (the installation at the burning bush, the revelation of the commandments on Sinai), the last two from the book of Deuteronomy (Moses the teacher and Moses' death). As we have discussed previously about the servant cycle broken, the first song is best seen to belong to the corporate servant Israel. We will only treat the other three texts as constitutive of the portrait of the individual servant.

Is 49:1–6

¹²⁰ In Deut 18:15 the prophet Moses anticipates, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers." Westermann also recognized the Moses tradition behind the servant's portrait. See *idem*, *Isaiah 40–66*, 21.

¹²¹ Seitz asserts that the servant is nowhere in Second Isaiah explicitly identified with Moses but only with Israel (49:3), so the reader should not make such arbitrary direct identification. *Idem*, *The Book of Isaiah 40–66: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections* (The New Interpreter's Bible; Nashville: Abingdon, 2001), 461. In response to the question: "If the Servant is Moses, why is Moses' name not explicitly mentioned in the text?" Baltzer argues that the reason is explained in Is 48:19. "It was the consequence of Israel's disobedience—its failure to keep the commandments: 'His name would not have been wiped out nor destroyed before me.' This is probably an interpretation of Ex 32:32, the story of the golden calf." In other words, Moses' name was blotted out after the golden calf incident as punishment for Israel. *Idem*, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 21.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 7–22. Baltzer categorizes Second Isaiah as a 'liturgical drama'.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 20–21.

¹²⁴ Baltzer, aligned with many other scholars, takes 48:16 in which the speaker speaks in first-person voice about his commissioning by YHWH connected to the servant's first-person monologue in 49:1–6. For the speaker of 48:16, see also Childs, *Isaiah*, 377–78; Seitz, "You Are My Servant," 129.

Readers who are puzzled by the ambiguous identity of the servant often find themselves even more bewildered when they come across the designation ‘Israel’ in 49:3. Childs correctly argued for an individual historical figure portrayed in the last three servant songs.¹²⁵ He elaborated that the movement from the collective Israel to a single historical figure (ch. 42 to ch. 49) is not because the collective Israel has been replaced by this individual but the individual servant rises “as a faithful embodiment of the nation Israel who has not performed its chosen role.”¹²⁶ Therefore, the ‘Israel’ here is to be understood as a ‘predicative’ of the servant, not a marker denoting the people of Israel.

The servant’s mouth is like a sword sharpened by YHWH (v.3). This simile, comments Baltzer, connects the servant’s word (‘mouth’) and the idea of the ‘holy war’ (‘sword’).¹²⁷ Is there a Moses tradition that associates the two? For Baltzer, the answer is affirmative. It is the slaughter of the Amalekites in Ex 17:8–16. The Vulgate version of the book of Judith has a summary of this account: “Think of Moses, the servant of the Lord, who smote the Amalekites, not with the sword but with holy prayer...” (Jdt 4:13). Josephus’s account of the battle with the Amalekites also reaffirms the association between Moses’ word and the holy war.¹²⁸ V.5 is also fraught with allusions to Moses’ accounts in the book of Exodus. Bringing Jacob back to God and gathering Israel is remarkably reminiscent of Moses’ mission recorded in the book of Exodus. Moses is to bring the Israelites out of Egypt not only to the promised land but also into a covenant with YHWH. The servant’s being ‘honoured’ reminds the reader of Moses’ special privilege of talking to God face-to-face (Ex 33:18). As he praises YHWH as “my strength”, Moses’ song in Ex 15 is resounding in our ears (15:2).¹²⁹ The former mission of the servant—to restore the tribes of Jacob (v.6)—employs language of the pre-monarchical traditions of the tribal league.¹³⁰ While Moses observed the order of the tribes in the wanderings through the wilderness, the Moses-like servant has a larger mission as to bring YHWH’s salvation to the nations. While Moses was given the Torah to instruct the Israelites, this new Moses, is to be a light for the Gentiles.

Is 50:4–9

The context of the second servant song exhibits a great contrast between the Moses-like servant and the despondent people of Israel. In the preceding text (50:2b–3) God responds to Israel’s repudiation of his salvation. Childs perceptively pointed out that the imagery employed here is purposefully that of the exodus, but the effect is ironically the reversal.¹³¹ In the exodus God punished Egypt by drying up the sea and the rivers to make the fish stink, and clothing the sky with blackness. The biblical imagery is of God’s judgment on Egypt at the exodus, but now it falls on Israel, who had just refused to share in the ‘new exodus’. The contrast reaches its poignancy as the servant’s obedient portrait is presented adjacently. Contrary to Israel’s refusal, the servant trusts in YHWH in obedience. Although the term ‘servant’ is not used in the text, the larger context removes any doubt that the speaker is the servant. The first song refers to his commission, and here his divine commission is rehearsed in the second song.

¹²⁵ Childs, *Isaiah*, 384–385.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 385.

¹²⁷ Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 307.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 308.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 310.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Childs, *Isaiah*, 394.

Baltzer comments that the portrait of the servant in the second servant song remarkably resembles that of Moses in the book of Deuteronomy.¹³² In Deuteronomy Moses is esteemed as a prophet (Deut 34:5, 10) and a teacher of the Torah (Deut 1:3,5). In 50:4–5, the Moses-like servant is taught (*למֹد*)¹³³ morning by morning as Moses was taught by YHWH at Sinai. V. 6 depicts the servant's meekness and humility reminiscent of Moses' portrait in Num 12:3: "Now Moses was a very humble man (*שָׁנִי*), more so than any other man on earth." The suffering of the servant might present some difficulties in association with Moses. Baltzer proposes that the tales about the "murmuring" in the exodus tradition, especially at Massah-Meribah and Baal-Peor, come to the audience's mind. However, Baltzer also admits that it is not easy to find any precise reference to the physical threat referred to in 50:6, or to a court action, as in 50:8. The case is similar with the last servant text (52:13–53:12). "One possible explanation might be that there were Moses traditions that have not been preserved in the canonical writings."¹³⁴ As such, the legal dispute in 50:8—"Who wishes to dispute (*רִיב*) with me?"—might be an interpretation of Israel's strife (*רִיב*) with Moses in the story of the murmuring of Ex 17. The despondent murmuring of the Israelites during the wandering in the wilderness had indeed caused much suffering to Moses as he remarked in his exodus memory: "How can I bear all by myself the weight and the burden of you, and your strife (*וַיַּרְבֵּיכֶם*)?" (Deut 1:12).

Is 52:13–53:12

Prior to our investigation into the last servant song, an observation should be made concerning the context. Seitz acutely discerns in 52:7–12 several clear references to the first exodus which highlight the Mosaic allusions in the representation of the suffering servant.¹³⁵ "Just as Moses dispatched the priests and his servants Joshua and Eleazar at the head of a new generation with a new possibility for life in the promised land, so also the servant found his vocation reaching its appointed end, in the context of his faithful carrying out of the mission to comfort Zion and God's people."¹³⁶

In the last servant text, the Mosaic portrait of the servant reaches its climax. Baltzer has examined in detail (verse by verse!) correspondences of the servant to Moses.¹³⁷ Due to the limit of space, we shall look at a few significant examples. In 53:1b a question is asked: "to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" The rhetorical question is answered obliquely in next verse (v.2) that YHWH's holy arm has been revealed to the servant. It is a question of the servant's

¹³² Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 340–41.

¹³³ The word *למֹד* (to teach, to learn) is a key word used in various forms with striking frequency in Deuteronomy. Of the total of 94 instances of the root, 27 fall to Psalms and 17 to Deuteronomy. Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 340, n. 77.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 341.

¹³⁵ Seitz, *The Book of Isaiah 40–66*, 455–56. For example, the sentinels' "eye to eye" (Is 52:8) recalls Moses' "face to face" (Deut 34:10); YHWH's holy arm (Is 52:10) is reminiscent of YHWH's mighty arm (Ex 15:16); the motif of the insistence that the unclean and uncircumcised would not enter God's sanctuary in 2 Kgs 25:8–17 and 2 Chr 36:5–7 is picked up in Is 52:11–12.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 456.

¹³⁷ For a thorough, verse-by-verse, analysis, see Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 392–429. I appreciate Baltzer's close and creative comparisons of the suffering Servant to the historical accounts in Moses' life. However, some of the alleged correspondences, particularly those that are argued purely based on lexical concurrences, appear to be somewhat far-fetched and factitious, e.g. the Servant's exaltation (Is 52:13) is related to Moses' going up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo (Deut 34:49–50); the lowly Servant from whom people "hide their face" (Is 53:3) is compared to Moses whose face was too glittering to look at after his encounter with God on the mountain (Ex 34:29–35). Nevertheless, many of Baltzer's observations remain very insightful and convincing.

legitimation. Baltzer points out that the metaphor of YHWH's arm derives from YHWH's title as 'warrior' (**אִישׁ מַלְכָּה** in Ex 15:3). In the song of Moses (Ex 15) Moses sings of YHWH's act with a mighty arm at the passage through the Red Sea (15:16). In Deuteronomy, the formula "with a strong hand and an outstretched arm" is a reminder of the divine help at the exodus (cf. Deut 4:34; 5:15; 7:19; 9:29; 11:2; 26:8). The mention of YHWH's arm can hardly avert any reminiscence of Moses and the exodus in the audience's mind.

The servants in the last servant song confess the sins of Israel by the remembrance of the servant's expiatory suffering and death. Baltzer links the Servant's bearing the sickness, sorrows, and guilt of the servants (53:3–4) to incidents in the exodus. For example, the sickness may recall Miriam's leprosy in Num 12, a story familiar to the Israelite audience.¹³⁸ The servant as a bearer of 'sorrows' (**מִכְאָב**) may relate to Moses' bearing Israelites' suffering of oppression in Egypt (Ex 3).¹³⁹ The healing ministry of the servant (Is 53:5) can also find its parallel to Moses' account of the "bronze serpent" (Num 21:4–9).¹⁴⁰ As the servant carries the iniquity of the servants, Moses also bears the guilt of the murmuring Israelites and was punished according to that guilt. The account at Kadesh (the waters of strife) in Num 20:1–13 poignantly records the incident that forbids Moses from entering the promised land.¹⁴¹ In summary, the servant's death is like that of Moses, who bears the sins of a wicked generation. Just as the suffering of the servant has effected the removal of the servants' sin, in the same way, Moses' death and intercession has brought new life for the Israelites.¹⁴²

Indeed, there exist numerous close affinities, explicitly or implicitly, between the portraits of the servant and Moses. And it is impossible to deny any intentional authorial effort in relating the two figures. The allusions to Moses inform our understanding of the vocation of the servant who comprehends his experience in the light of Moses' legacy with ardent prophetic obedience. Yet, it is also notable that there still exist between the two portraits many differences which render minute correlations difficult to be corroborated. Seitz is correct in pointing out that the servant is depicted as innocent in a way outstrips the portrayal of Moses.¹⁴³ Moreover, the phrase "to prolong days" (Is 53:10) may suggest a future even in contrast with that of Moses: The servant's 'afterlife' in the promised land of God's new generation is assured.¹⁴⁴

As we have hitherto discussed, Second Isaiah and Book IV of the Psalter both express the same vigorous interest in a Mosaic figure, yet in different ways of expression. Book IV, on the one hand, explicitly recalls Moses by evoking the stories of the exodus and by placing Moses' psalm in the opening the book (Ps 90). Second Isaiah, on the other hand, describes the prophet-servant with profuse Mosaic allusions, intentionally presenting him as a new Moses in a new generation. With different ways of expression, as a corollary, the concomitant notion of the Torah also carries different concerns. Book IV, through direct evocation of Moses, emphasizes the importance of the Mosaic Law to call for Israel's return to God. The forward-looking and

¹³⁸ Ibid., 408–409. After Aaron acknowledges to Moses: "We have sinned [by disputing against Moses' authority]" (Num 12:11), Moses thereupon intercedes for Miriam's sickness and she is healed (v. 13).

¹³⁹ Ibid., 407.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 412.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 413. Moses has intervened for the sake of his people, but he is guilty in the eyes of God.

¹⁴² Seitz, *The Book of Isaiah 40–66*, 462.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 467.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

universal perspective of Second Isaiah,¹⁴⁵ however, uses the term Torah to denote YHWH's just order established in the world and instructions for a righteous life.¹⁴⁶

The reason for the enthusiastic interest in the Mosaic profile in both Second Isaiah and Book IV may well have to do with the historical context in which they were written, i.e. the exilic period. Viewing from the Deuteronomistic framework of the Psalter, Zenger suggests that it is not difficult to surmise the reason for the Psalter's direct evocation of Moses. "When this catastrophe [i.e. the fall of the nation, the exile] is evaluated from the perspective of the (Deuteronomistic) 'theology of God's wrath,' what is needed is the prophetic suppliant *par excellence* of the 'primal beginning,' if the history of God with Israel is to continue."¹⁴⁷ In the case of Second Isaiah, the oblique Mosaic references are not surprising in view of the prominent theme of the new exodus in the prophet's oracles.¹⁴⁸ The exodus, comments Westermann, is the most important historical tradition employed in Second Isaiah.¹⁴⁹ The prophet and his people found themselves involved in a situation similar to the old exodus experienced. And therefore, when the prophet proclaims the impending release from Babylon, it is natural for him to declare it as a second exodus reminiscent of the deliverance from Egypt. It is powerful to recall the old exodus in order to depict the new, though with the awareness that YHWH's new salvation is something which cannot possibly be represented by any historical event in the past (cf. the tension between the former and the latter things).¹⁵⁰ In the light of Moses' work in the older exodus, the prophet-servant's achievement in the new exodus is reckoned as fulfilling Moses' prophecy in Deut 18:15: "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people..."

V. YHWH THE KING

The hope for restoration of the Davidic kingship is one of the most prominent themes in First Isaiah but is hardly found in Second Isaiah. A canonical reading that seeks to appreciate the unity of the book of Isaiah drives our inquiry into the evolution of this royal theology. In this section we will first examine the Davidic/messianic king in First Isaiah. Secondly, the alleged 'candidates' for this messianic figure in Second Isaiah, i.e. Cyrus (44:28; 45:1–8) and the people of Israel (55:3), will be discussed. And thirdly, we will turn to YHWH's kingship which is initially adumbrated in First Isaiah (chs. 2, 6)¹⁵¹ and later fully established in Second Isaiah (41:21; 43:15; 44:6; 52:7). We will conclude that the royal theology has evolved from an emphatic focus on the human kingship in First Isaiah into acknowledgement of YHWH as the

¹⁴⁵ The 'universal' perspective of Second Isaiah, as I phrase it, denotes the extended concern for the salvation of the nations.

¹⁴⁶ Norbert Lohfink "Covenant and Torah in the Pilgrimage of the Nations," in *The God of Israel and the Nations: Studies in Israel and the Psalms* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2000), 33–75.

¹⁴⁷ Zenger, "The God of Israel's Reign," 166.

¹⁴⁸ Clifford, "Second Isaiah," 500.

¹⁴⁹ Besides the Exodus, other historical traditions that Second Isaiah builds on are Zion tradition and covenants with Noah (54:9), the patriarchs (43:27), and Abraham (41:8). Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 21–22.

¹⁵⁰ Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 247.

¹⁵¹ Though the theologoumenon of divine kingship appears conspicuously in the throne vision report, it also appears in 24:23 and 33:22. However, we will not have space to examine these two texts. See Joseph Blenkinsopp's brief discussion, *idem*, *Isaiah 40–55: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 236.

supreme king over Israel and the nations in Second Isaiah. This shift in focus of Israel's royal theology is analogous to the narrative thread from Books I – III to Books IV–V of the Psalter.¹⁵²

1. The Davidic King in First Isaiah

Prior to the discussion of the messianic oracles in First Isaiah, one important notion is to be made concerning the nature of the messianic figure. Von Rad asserted that Isaiah's timeframe of the messianic vision is not in a vague future.¹⁵³ Instead, the prophet clearly envisaged in the immediate future the enthronement of an anointed king, a new David, at whose advent YHWH will restore the glory of the original Davidic empire. In other words, the messianic king preached by the prophet is not qualitatively an 'eschatological/end-time' figure but rather, by W. Rose's definition, "a future royal figure sent by God who will bring salvation to God's people and the world and establish a kingdom characterized by features like peace and justice."¹⁵⁴ It is true that this Messiah was interpreted by later generations, particularly of Second Temple Judaism and Christianity, as an eschatological king who will come at the end of time, but such vision was hardly what the prophet and his historical audience had embraced.

Textual evidences also support the nature of the Messiah as a non-eschatological but an immediate future king. First Isaiah chapters have fundamentally to do with the kings of Judah. Close scrutiny shows that the text clearly and purposefully presents a contrast between Kings Ahaz and Hezekiah. The juxtaposition of the two prose sections (chs. 7–8 and 36–39) makes it evident that "a common editorial hand and purpose is at work in these two narrative sections seems beyond doubt. At these two key moments in history, the faith of the royal house was put to test. While Ahaz failed, Hezekiah emerged as the paradigmatic king."¹⁵⁵ Such juxtaposition between the two kings, as P. Ackroyd correctly analyzed, also directs the reader to discover the function of chs. 36–39 in the canonical form of the Book of Isaiah.¹⁵⁶ He contended that the Hezekiah narrative lends us an interpretive lens for the reading of chs. 1–35, especially the messianic oracles of 6:1–9:6. To put it differently, the paradigmatic portrait of Hezekiah represented in chs. 36–39 leads the reader to read the messianic oracles in the light of Hezekiah. Although there is no previous explicit allusion to Hezekiah before ch.36 (apart from the editorial formula, 1:1), there are implicit pointers to him found in the messianic oracles. The mysterious

¹⁵² Our prior inquiry deals with the shift in focus of the royal theology from First Isaiah to Second Isaiah. The development from Second Isaiah to Third Isaiah is beyond the scope of this paper and requires another paper for a thorough investigation. Seitz has made a few preliminary observations, i.e. David did not boldly reemerge in Isa. 40–66 as in Books IV – V of the Psalter. Idem, *Word without End*, 164–65. Williamson discerns a latent royal theology still focusing YHWH's kinship in Third Isaiah. YHWH is never expressly styled as 'king,' but the royal language is used in close association with him (without stressing his royal attributes as such; Is 57:15; 66:1). Williamson argues that in Third Isaiah the notion of divine kingship is so taken for granted that it can be used as an agreed basis for further development in terms of God's surprising condescension. Idem, *Variations on a Theme*, 7.

¹⁵³ Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 170–71.

¹⁵⁴ Quotation by M. Boda from Walter Rose, *Zemah and Zerubbabel: Messianic Expectations in the Early Postexilic Period* (JSOTSup; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 23. Boda analytically lists three definitions of the Messiah in the Old Testament. (1) An eschatological figure who will play an authoritative role in the end time, usually the eschatological king. This messianic outlook is evident in the Second Temple Judaism and Christianity. (2) A future royal figure, such as the messianic king envisaged by the prophet Isaiah, as we have described. (3) A present, political and religious leader who is appointed by God, applied predominantly to a king, but also to a priest and occasionally a prophet. While the temporal reference of the first two messianic figures is future, the third is present. See Mark J. Boda, "Figuring the Future: The Prophets and the Messiah," in *The Messiah in the Old and New Testaments* (McMaster New Testament Studies; ed. Stanley E. Porter; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 35–40.

¹⁵⁵ Seitz, "First Isaiah," 482.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Ackroyd, "Isaiah 36–39: Structure and Function."

child of 7:14, the oracles of 8:23–9:6, 11:1–10, and the other messianic passages provide repeated indication of the hope of a coming king after Ahaz in the immediate future. And “the portrait of Hezekiah in chs. 36–39 is such a king anticipated in chs. 1–35.”¹⁵⁷ To sum up, the messianic king envisioned by the prophet and presented by the canonical form of the book of Isaiah points to a new king in the immediate future, not the end time.

We have hitherto examined the nature and historical identity of the Davidic/messianic king. Let us now turn to the oracles of this kingly figure in First Isaiah (7:14; 9:1–7; 11:1–5; 16:4b–5; 32:1–5) to consider the character of his regime. The first oracle (7:14; oracle of Immanuel) differs from the rest of the others by its emphasis on the naming of the child instead of the character of his rule. The passage’s *Sitz im Buch* (canonical setting) closely relates the next messianic oracle (9:1–7), directing the reader to read the two texts in the light of each other.¹⁵⁸ This child is further introduced in the message of 9:1–7 whose central concern purports to announce a turning point in the dynasty’s fortunes and the inauguration of the long hoped-for rule of justice and righteousness.¹⁵⁹ The king’s fundamental task is to commence and maintain YHWH’s ideal for the society of Israel. The oracle of 11:1–5 closely parallels that of 9:1–7, portraying this king as a new David who will come to restore the society of Israel after YHWH’s purging (the downfall of Assyria in ch. 10).¹⁶⁰ The message of 16:4b–5 represents a continuation of the direct speech of those seeking asylum (16:3–4a). They look forward to a day when oppression ceases and the Davidic throne is secured, issuing sure justice and righteousness.¹⁶¹ Scholars have different interpretations of the kingly figure in 32:1–5. Reading with parallels in the wisdom literature (e.g. Prov 8:15–16), some argue that the passage does not deal with one specific king but kings in general.¹⁶² However, a reading that pays close attention to the canonical shape of the book points us to King Hezekiah in the later narrative of chs. 36–39.¹⁶³ The messianic king’s reign again is typically characterized by the ideal social order of righteousness and justice. From the aforementioned passages we conclude that the prophet Isaiah, standing on the tradition of David (and Zion), was specifically interested in the royal house and YHWH’s choice of David (and Zion).¹⁶⁴ He envisaged an ideal society abiding by YHWH’s ordinances under the rule of a new David.

2. Messianic Kingship in Second Isaiah?

Those who read the book of Isaiah in its unity often find themselves puzzled by the enigma of the shift in the messianic figure from chs. 1–39 to 40ff. What has happened to the messianic hope in chs. 40ff? Several explanations have been offered to account for a shift: (1) Cyrus has risen to fulfill the messianic role; (2) the Davidic kingship has been democratized to the people of Israel; (3) the individual servant functions as the Messiah.¹⁶⁵ We have closely studied the servant in section IV and found that nowhere is the servant designated as the Messiah nor is he depicted in any royal image. Thus, the ensuing section will briefly examine the first two

¹⁵⁷ Idem, “The Death of Hezekiah: A Pointer to the Future?” 176.

¹⁵⁸ Seitz, *Isaiah 1–39* (Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching; eds. James Mays and Patrick D. Miller, Jr.; Louisville: John Knox Press, 1993), 74.

¹⁵⁹ Williamson, *Variations on a Theme*, 45.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 50–56.

¹⁶¹ Seitz, *Isaiah 1–39*, 139.

¹⁶² For example, Williamson, *Variations on a Theme*, 63–64.

¹⁶³ Seitz, *Isaiah 1–39*, 229.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 71.

¹⁶⁵ For the representative scholars, see pp. 9–10 of this paper.

proposals, and we will conclude that neither Cyrus nor the people of Israel is the successor of the messianic kingship.

The oracle concerning Cyrus declares explicitly: “Thus said YHWH to Cyrus, his anointed one (messiah, מָשִׁיחַ; 45:1).” In other words, the text makes it clear that Cyrus is YHWH’s messiah! Those who support this notion reason that because the Davidic line and hopes were annihilated or brought into total reconfiguration during the exile, Israel’s messianic hope was projected onto the foreign king. Seitz poignantly points out the problem in this argument.¹⁶⁶ First, the picture of Cyrus found in the book of Isaiah is not entirely a positive one and would certainly represent a strange form of kingship.¹⁶⁷ Second, Cyrus’ mission is very circumscribed in character, unlike that of the Davidic king. Von Rad’s assertion also echoes to this point: “this [the title of YHWH’s anointed one] is no more than a rousing rhetorical exaggeration inspired by the actual situation...Cyrus was YHWH’s instrument in basically the same way as the Assyrians were this [sic] for Isaiah of Jerusalem...If Cyrus had a *charisma*, his activity is exclusively restricted to the political field.”¹⁶⁸ Therefore, the ‘messiah’ is ascribed to the Persian King Cyrus only to denote his role as YHWH’s instrument to bring salvation to Israel, not the Messiah in the technical sense.¹⁶⁹

What has happened to the messianic hope in chs. 40ff? The majority of scholars, such as Eissfeld, von Rad, and Westermann, have argued for the ‘democratization’ of the messianic kingship to the people of Israel. For both von Rad and Westermann, the theme of the messianic kingship absent in Second Isaiah is due to the prophetic freedom to re-interpret old traditions.¹⁷⁰ The prophet of Second Isaiah has freely and boldly reshaped the old Davidic tradition from a messianic prediction into the proclamation that “with the imminent divine act of release, the tokens of grace vouchsafed to David are transferred to Israel.”¹⁷¹

The base text used for the argument of democratization is Is 55:3 where the mention of David reappears for the first time after the First Isaiah chapters as well as for the last time in the whole book of Isaiah.¹⁷² To grasp the context, we shall read 55:3–5a:

- (v.3) Give ear and come to me;
hear me, that your soul may live.
I will make an *everlasting covenant* with you,
my *faithful love* promised to David.
- (v.4) See, I have made him a witness to the peoples,
a leader and commander of the peoples.
- (v.5a) Surely you will summon nations you know not,
and nations that do not know you will hasten to you...

¹⁶⁶ See Seitz’s analysis of this surmise. Idem, *Word Without End*, 153–54.

¹⁶⁷ E.g. Cyrus did not know YHWH. Is 45:4b: “I call you by name, I hail you by title, though you have not known me.”

¹⁶⁸ Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (vol. II), 244, n. 16.

¹⁶⁹ Another example of YHWH anointing the foreign king can be found in 1 Kg 19:15: Hazael of Damascus, the king of Aram.

¹⁷⁰ Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (vol. II), 240. For Eissfeld’s similar contention, see Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 370.

¹⁷¹ Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 384.

¹⁷² The name David appears 9 times in First Isaiah (7:2, 13; 9:7; 16:5; 22:9, 22; 29:1; 37:35; 38:5), once in chs. 40ff. (55:3).

Does the text *per se* suggest any notion of kingship transferral from David (or the kings of the Davidic dynasty) to the people of Israel as a whole? J. Blenkinsopp persuasively refutes such interpretation. He contends that the language used in these verses does not imply a commitment to the restoration of the Davidic dynasty. Instead, “what is promised is that the hearers will experience the same tokens of God’s *faithful love* that he performed in former times on behalf of David.”¹⁷³ In other words, the prophet is reassuring the people of Israel with YHWH’s covenantal faithfulness, rather than the Davidic kingship which was once promised to David in the past and now is (re)pledged to them. Now that the (re)assurance of YHWH’s covenantal love will in turn transform Israel’s relationship to the nations (vv.4–5a). Since Israel does not inherit David’s kingship, she is not, as a corollary, put into the position of ruler with respect to the nations (*contra Lohfink*).¹⁷⁴ R. Clifford is right to comment that it is David’s role of ‘witness’ to the gentile nations that is to be taken up by Israel, not his rulership.¹⁷⁵ Israel’s prosperity, visible to the nations especially in its new exodus-conquest, witnesses YHWH’s superiority among the nations. Therefore, Israel is not to rule over the nations but to serve as the mediator who witnesses YHWH’s supremacy over all humanity.

As we have hitherto examined, there cannot be found in Second Isaiah any notion of transferring the messianic kingship to a human figure whatsoever, be it the suffering Servant, the Persian King Cyrus, or the people of Israel. The reason for the absence of the Messiah has to do with the new focus on YHWH’s kingship in Is 40ff. The Isaianic vision of the ideal king has been removed from the human king to the divine King.

3. The Kingship of YHWH

It is notable that the Isaianic royal theology, from Is 40 onward, centres on the divine kingship, yet this vision is not entirely innovative of Second Isaiah. The image of YHWH as the eschatological, ultimate king has already been adumbrated in the first part of the book. The eschatological vision of the nations’ pilgrimage in ch. 2 tacitly envisages YHWH as a king enthroned in Zion. The nations stream to his palace (*תְּמִימָה*; temple, house) to seek his instruction (*torah*) in the proper way of life.¹⁷⁶ Reading in the wisdom context, this scene features a wise king who imparts instruction to his people (cf. King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba; 1 Kg 10:1–13).¹⁷⁷ The prophet Isaiah’s vision in ch. 6 also vividly portrays YHWH as a king on a throne, high and exalted, in the heavenly council. The adumbrated notion of YHWH’s kingship begins to rise to the fore after the transitional/pivotal narrative of chs. 36–39 in which the attention has turned from the human king to the destiny of Zion, and in turn, the attention to YHWH as king enthroned in Zion.¹⁷⁸

YHWH as King of Jacob (41:21)

¹⁷³ Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 370. Italic mine.

¹⁷⁴ Lohfink, “Covenant and Torah in the Pilgrimage of the Nations,” 52. Williamson’s contention for the parallel of hierarchy, i.e. God—King (David)—Israel versus God—Israel—the nations, therefore is debatable. Idem, *Variations on a Theme*, 122–27.

¹⁷⁵ See Williamson’s discussion of Clifford’s interpretation. *Ibid.*, 119.

¹⁷⁶ The *torah* here can hardly be the Mosaic Law in the technical sense but rather the word of God which teaches the pilgrims about a life of justice and righteousness. Cf. Lohfink, “Covenant and Torah in the Pilgrimage of the Nations,” 43–44.

¹⁷⁷ Williamson, *Variations on a Theme*, 137–39.

¹⁷⁸ Seitz, *Zion’s Final Destiny*, 196.

B. Gosse guides our attention to the depiction of the divine king against the backdrop of the death of the human king in Is 6.¹⁷⁹ This contrast also provides us an analogy to the rise of YHWH's kingship at the turn of ch. 40. The first time YHWH is explicitly portrayed as king occurs in ch. 6 when the death of King Uzziah is particularly mentioned as the backdrop. By the same token, we see at the outset of Second Isaiah (41:21) YHWH is explicitly designated as king as the death of the Davidic kingship is presupposed in the transition from chs. 36–39 to 40ff. (cf. the completion of “the hard service,” 40:2).¹⁸⁰ The literary structure of ch. 41 is clear: two mock-trial speeches (vv. 1–4, 21–29) bracket the oracles of promise (vv. 8–20). The title of YHWH as Jacob's king is located in the context of disputation with the foreign nations and their idols (vv. 21–29).¹⁸¹ It sets the stage for the legal trial against the gods in which YHWH challenges them to tell the “former things” and the “latter things” to prove themselves gods of history. After they fail to respond, the conclusion is drawn: YHWH is the only deity capable of both predicting and bringing about events to political reality.¹⁸²

Your (Israel's) King (43:15)

The genre of the oracle of 43:15 is often called by form-critics YHWH's self-prediction/identification.¹⁸³ Ch. 43 comprises an oracle of salvation (vv. 1–7), a trial speech (vv. 8–15), a second oracle of salvation (vv. 16–21), and another trial speech (vv. 22–28). If we take vv. 14–15 as belonging to the preceding section,¹⁸⁴ it can be read as “the culmination of the preceding trial speech.”¹⁸⁵ The designation of YHWH as king occurs again in the context of a trial. The language is again that of polemic. The nations are again assembled for a fictive trial and again the challenge is mounted: “Who can show us the former things?” (9b). Yet, as Blenkinsopp comments, the focus of the trial is fairly different from the last one. The issue turns on who can claim the power of divinity on the basis of what has happened in the past, i.e. the entire sequence of events connected with Israel's entire history, especially the deliverance from captivity as promised in the preceding oracle (v. 12).¹⁸⁶ Once more, in the disputation with the nations, YHWH proclaims himself to be the only true God and Israel's king.

King of Israel (44:6)

The verse offers an introduction to a new announcement of promise in vv. 7–8. The theme addresses YHWH's complete incomparability in the language of disputation with the challenge for all to find a comparison and declare it.¹⁸⁷ YHWH is Israel's true king and redeemer.

Your God Reigns (52:7)

¹⁷⁹ Bernard Gosse, “Isaïe 6, la mort des rois de Juda dans le livre d' Isaïe et la royauté de Yahvé,” *Biblische Notizen* 125 (2005), 5–10.

¹⁸⁰ It is also notable that the image of YHWH as king is adumbrated in the praise of divine majesty in Is 40. Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 14.

¹⁸¹ Blenkinsopp argues that the title ‘Jacob's king’ or ‘Israel's king’ anticipates the complex of themes involving kingship, victorious combat developed as a mirror image of Babylonian imperial ideology in the cult of Marduk. Idem, *Isaiah 40–55*, 205.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 227.

¹⁸⁴ Blenkinsopp views vv. 14–15 as introduction to the following section (vv. 16–21), an oracle of salvation. Ibid., 225–228.

¹⁸⁵ Seitz, *The Book of Isaiah 40–66*, 376.

¹⁸⁶ Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 335.

¹⁸⁷ Childs, *Isaiah*, 342.

The declaration of YHWH's kingship reach its climax in 52:7 which announces to Zion that her God has returned to reign. In vv. 1–6 Zion is charged to rise and put on glorious apparel because the former uncleanness and defilement are now being done away with. The heralds of good tidings then appear on the mountains, announcing the good news of YHWH's reign.

As we have noted, three out of four places where YHWH is explicitly designated as king are found in the context of polemic against the nations and their idols. The objects of the attack are not only the foreign nations and the gods but also the prophet's own nation, Israel. Westermann commented that the actual situation of exile might have prompted the prophet to use polemics in his presentation of YHWH's kingship.¹⁸⁸ The fall of the nation might have incited Israelites' doubt about YHWH's superiority to the gods of Babylon. In the time of affliction, the vision of YHWH as great and majestic reaffirms his power to bring about the new miraculous deliverance. Declaring God's superiority despite the fall of the dynasty "represents the first move in human history towards the dissolution of the link between 'religion' and politics."¹⁸⁹

We have observed, both in Book IV of the Psalter and Second Isaiah, the emphasis on the divine kingship over the messianic human king. While the shifts in the focus of royal theology are similar in both cases, the frame of reference diverges greatly. The psalmists stand on the traditions of Israel's history looking back to the *past*, e.g. the traditions of the exodus, Moses, and the patriarchs, reminding the audience of YHWH's rulership when Israel had not had its own (human) king. YHWH was already their king even before the Davidic dynasty. The prophet in Second Isaiah, however, turns completely to the *future*. Although he also uses Israel's traditions, e.g. the exodus tradition and Zion tradition, he does not direct the audience to the past. Instead, with reinterpretation of the old traditions for his present day and context, the prophet proclaims that Jerusalem's salvation lies in the future event, not in any historical event of the past.¹⁹⁰ As YHWH once ruled Israel through the exodus in the days of Moses, he is and will be reigning over her in the present situation of exile to bring salvation upon her predicament.¹⁹¹

CONCLUSION

In this paper we have surveyed the affinities between Second Isaiah and Book IV of the Psalter viewed by scholars from different approaches, such as direct referential, form-critical, and redaction-critical methods. Seitz's canonical reading which takes seriously the final shape of the text and appreciates the unity of the canonical books of Psalms and Isaiah yields new and provocative fruits. I have thus adopted the canonical approach to the parallel reading of Second Isaiah and Book IV, focusing on the narrative effects of the two units in their respective canonical context.

Through our close examinations we have observed that both Second Isaiah and Book IV demonstrate a vigorous interest in a Mosaic figure. Book IV, on the one hand, explicitly recalls Moses by evoking the stories of the exodus and by placing Moses' psalm in the opening of the book (Ps 90). Second Isaiah, on the other hand, by describing the prophet-servant with various Mosaic allusions, intentionally presents the servant as a new Moses in a new generation of exile.

¹⁸⁸ Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 14–5.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 15.

¹⁹⁰ Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 175.

¹⁹¹ Gunkel also had a short analysis of different features between the YHWH *MALAK* psalms and the prophecies of YHWH's kingship. Idem, *Psalms*, 276–77.

The reminiscence of Moses in both texts has to do with Israel's present situation of exile which highly resembles the exodus in the days of Moses.

We have noted as well that both Second Isaiah and Book IV function as a turning point in the thematic development of the books. They represent a shift in focus from the Davidic dynasty to the kingship of YHWH. In regard to the Psalter, the intensive concern for David and the royal dynasty recedes after Book III, while the praise of YHWH's kingship comes to the fore from Book IV onward. By the same token, the vision of the Messiah and restoration of the Davidic throne embraced by First Isaiah, drastically gives way to the superiority of YHWH's kingship at the turn of Second Isaiah. While the psalmists refer to Israel's history in the past, the prophet looks forward to the future. This parallel of focal shift in the royal theology provides a plausible explanation to the enigma of the messianic hope absent in Second Isaiah chapters onward.

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