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The Salvation Army USA Western Territory

David Witthoff, Editor



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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	5
Theological Society Keynote Address <i>David Witthoff</i>	7
How Truth Motivates <i>Lt. Sidney Salcido</i>	10
Introduction to Canonical Context As Interpretive Theological Framework For Preaching and Interpreting The Psalms <i>Major Pat Irvine</i>	16
An Updated Translation of 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and its Relationship to Doctrine 10 in the Salvation Army <i>David Witthoff</i>	24

Introduction

It is my great pleasure to introduce to you the first issue of the Journal of The Salvation Army Biblical, Theological, and Missiological Society. This work is a collection of the papers presented at the society's first meeting. Many came to hear the theological discussion, to ask questions, and to fellowship with other Salvationists and friends. This made our inaugural meeting during Commissioning weekend in June 2017 a resounding success.

The papers presented at that meeting are recorded here. Only slight editorial work has been done, and no major alterations. The Keynote Address from the inaugural meeting is included as well. The three papers included are:

Lt. Sidney Salcido's work in "How Truth Motivates" is an excellent look at the nature of truth and its effect on a person's life. Major Pat Irvine's work in "Introduction to Canonical Context as Interpretive Theological Framework for Preaching and Interpreting the Psalms" invites the reader to consider a more comprehensive framework for interpreting the Psalms. Finally, my effort in "An Updated Translation of 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and its Relationship to Doctrine 10 in The Salvation Army" seeks to show how an issue of translation was incorporated into this doctrine.

Each work was read and approved by the society's oversight panel. We hope that these works edify the church and inform the reader about important aspects of spiritual life, theological study, and mission practice.

I would like to thank the Western Territory Cabinet and, specifically, both Program Secretaries who supported this work: Colonel Edward Hill and Lt. Colonel Lee Lescano. A special thank you also to the members of

the oversight panel—Alexa Morris, Captain Dean Lee, Major Jeff Martin, Captain Martin Ross, and Meagan Hawk—for their hard work in making this theological society a reality.

Finally, a special thank you also to the former Territorial Youth Secretaries Majors Roy and Paula Wild who saw the vision for this project and encouraged the team to run with it.

—David Witthoff

Theological Society Keynote Address

By David Witthoff

Delivered June 3, 2017

“At last he came to a door, with these words in glowing emeralds:

THE END OF THE WORLD

He did not hesitate. He opened the door and stepped through.”

—Orson Scott Card, *Ender’s Game*

WHY A BIBLICAL-THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY? That is the question of a keynote address such as this: “Why do we need a biblical, theological, and missiological society?” To answer this, we should return to our past.

In our history, The Salvation Army was founded by revivalists, essentially. The Booths, Railton, even Brengle, were affected by a culture of revivalism with its theological strengths and pitfalls. Unfortunately, what was once a strength of ours in passion and mission has become, in some ways, a liability. The revivalism, the passion for souls in Salvationists has not changed, but the world around us has changed drastically. Our methods have not always kept up. Now, we exist sort of out-of-time; displaced from the world of our birth. At this point, we must reconsider our place in the world, and our purpose. It is a question of identity.

There is a pattern seen in denominational histories. I think it was Mark Knoll who observed it first, but there appears to be a pattern that denominations go through over the course of about 150 years. At this point, typically, there is great uncertainty over identity and church fragmentation is common. The pattern holds roughly for the Church of England to the Methodists to The Salvation Army. And what did the Boundless International Congress just two summers ago celebrate? Our 150 year birthday...We follow a pattern in denominations where we struggle with identity after about 150 years.

So what do we do? Unmoored from our time and place in the world, and subject to this pattern of identity crisis and fragmentation—what hope is there? Could we design something new? Write some new treatise? Create a new program? Could a discipleship training school or a small group curriculum save us from ruin? Could a theological society?

In attempting to strike out with new ideas, you or I would not be the first to try to redefine our identity. We're not the first to hope for new ideas, or to considering avenues of improvement. This call is neither rare nor revolutionary. In fact, it is common at this point. It is expected. We're just the next iteration, the next cycle to take up the call. We know that if we don't continue to innovate, to be creative, and to address our culture, what we're doing now will just continue to get us the results we're getting now, if that. Who we are and what we do does not have the impact or produce the results it once did. What is required is "to sing a new song unto the Lord" as the Scripture says.

In the face of changing times and sometimes declining results—in the face of a culture that is markedly different than the one we were born into, we must remember that the soul of the movement is still in there (it is still here). It is in you and I and in anyone who still believes in the primacy of the Gospel to change lives. We believe it can change the heart of sinners; it can surely change the heart of our organization.

Perhaps what we need is a new kind of soldier, one as Orson Card described, "...who doesn't think the way we think, or fear the things we fear." And what we fear too often is the unknown, and when the future is unknown we tend to play it safe.

As an illustration of the unknown, I want you to consider the idea of a door in our metaphorical path (and the path is life, of course). This door is in front of us. It is closed right now because the future is unknown, but let me suggest what may be behind this door. It opens, and behind it is future where we are leading a movement of evangelical intellectual life. This door in front of us leads to an informed, holistic approach to evangelism, discipleship, and the Christian life. It might sound ridiculous because we've never really been an intellectual people. Academic theological and biblical studies have been viewed as unnecessary, or as an obstruction to just getting people saved. Samuel Brengle was called "one of them dangerous classes" by William Booth and Bramwell Booth because of his higher education.

You see this door is at the end of our Salvationist world as we know it; the edge of our understanding, even at the edge of our mission. We could fall off the edge of our world—but perhaps this is where the Lord would lead us, to once again assume a new and incarnational life where we have never gone before; imagine it: The Salvation Army as an incubator for a renewed, evangelical, intellectual mind.

If you thought a theological society was somehow removed from the heart and soul of The Salvation Army, think again. We need a theological society because we need each other. We need it because we have been instructed to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. We need it because we have been called to go into all the world to make disciples. Finally, we need it because we have a greater untapped potential for the Kingdom than we have yet realized. Together, in this endeavor, and to fulfill this commission, we will not fail. Do not hesitate, saints. Open the door, and step through.

How Truth Motivates

By Lt. Sidney Salcido

There is something missing in my life, and it has to do with my need to understand what I must do, not what I must know—except, of course, that a certain amount of knowledge is presupposed in every action. I need to understand my purpose in life, to see what God wants me to do, and this means I must find a truth which is true for me, that I must find that idea which I can live and die.¹

THE WORDS OF SØREN KIERKEGAARD here may seem to indicate a certain looking forward to the Postmodern world coming out of the 1960s, which began to perceive truth as a personal experience derived subjectively rather than through an outer, objective source. Kierkegaard however demonstrated a *search* for truth, eventually found in the Gospel. He sought that which “reaches to the deepest roots of my existence and wherein I am connected into the divine and held fast to it, even though the whole world falls apart.”² His word can be seen in a statement in John 14 where Jesus says to Thomas “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6 NIV). The deepest roots of our existence must be in him.

However, a question becomes evident: how do we really know what is truth? In the academic halls of many seminaries that espouse Postmodern thought, truth can be many things to many people, as “a nebulous concept—a slippery beast eluding our understanding.”³ They see truth passing through the lenses of many human interpretations, expressed through language that cannot be absolute or certain as we would like. A contemporary reference is Bill Clinton’s defense of his public lie when he proclaimed, “it depends on what the word ‘is’ is.” *Slate* stated he should be called, “Existential Willy.”⁴

1 Søren Kierkegaard, “An Entry from the Journal of the Young Kierkegaard,” in Louis Pojman, *Classics of Philosophy*, vol. 11, *Modern and Contemporary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 902.

2 Kierkegaard, “Entry from the Journal” p. 902.

3 James K.A Smith, *Who’s Afraid of Postmodernism? Taking Derrida, Lyotard, and Foucault to Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006) p. 19.

On the other side of the aisle is the ancient view of truth, seen from the ancient Philosophers as absolute, or what is noted as the “correspondence theory of truth.” Groothuis explains a “proposition is true or false not because of any quality of my belief concerning it, but by virtue of whether the belief accurately represents or corresponds to reality.”⁵ Most conservative evangelicals hold to this view of truth.

Can truth be somewhere in between these two polar beliefs however? It is true that truth corresponds with reality, but it can't be denied that truth has a lot to do with experience, too, being subjective. The statement that Jesus is “the way, the truth, and the life” indicates a journey to truth which ends in one *getting* life. It is not simply propositions on reality, but experiences, and not simply for convincing, but a motivation to action. This essay will examine the primary Old and New Testament words for truth, and a look at the motivation which truth generates, and how this gives us the character of the person of Christ in the work of his spirit.

The meaning of truth in the ancient languages

In the Old Testament, the word אמת ('*emeth*) is one of the most common words to represent truth. Psalm 25:5 is an example: “Guide me in your truth (אמת) and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long” (NIV). Not only do we see propositional truth, but personal attention to the “guiding” of it. There's Jeremiah 14:13: “Then I said, ‘Ah, Lord God! Behold, the prophets say to them, ‘You shall not see the sword, nor shall you have famine, but I will give you assured (אמת) peace in this place.’” (NKJV). Note one is “assured” and that by a feeling of peace. Proverbs 11:18 says those who sow righteousness have a “sure” (אמת) award. Being “sure” is a display of confidence, which is tied into their emotions to the object. Gesenius identifies this assurance as “peace and stability”⁶ also. In Psalm 15:2 the heart comes into it: “The one whose walk is blameless, who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from their heart” (NIV). God promises in 1 Kings 2:4 that He will bless Israel with a king forever if they “walk

4 Timothy Noah, “Bill Clinton and the Meaning of ‘Is’” in *Slate*, 13 September 1998, http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/chatterbox/1998/09/bill_clinton_and_the_meaning_of_is.html. Existentialism was fathered by Søren Kierkegaard, and is the foundation of Postmodern thought.

5 Douglas Groothuis, *Truth Decay: Defending Christianity Against the Challenges of Post-modernism* (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2000).

6 H.W.F. Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1979). p. 571.

in truth (ἡ ἀλήθεια) before me with all their heart and soul” (KJV). Here it adds not only heart but the whole soul. One can see the subjective act in truth.

The New Testament Greek word ἀλήθεια (*alêtheia*) which derives from the negation (“a”) of the word λανθάνω (*lanthano*) meaning “ignorance,” to “lie hid”, or even to “escape” one’s attention.⁷ Truth then, as Michel Henry states, “is what shows itself.”⁸ He continues: “The ‘world’s truth’ is nothing other than this: a self-production of ‘outsideness’ as the horizon of visibility in and through which every thing can become visible and thus become a ‘phenomenon’ for us.”⁹ Not simply an acknowledgement but a phenomenon that *happens* to the one experiencing it. We may refer to the “light bulb” going on when one experiences truth. Then there’s Jesus statement in John 8:32: “Then you will know the truth (ἀλήθεια), and the truth will *set you free*” (NIV). Sin causes ignorance and darkness that truth liberates us from.¹⁰ With that freedom comes the experiencing of the actual power that is felt by the believer. Vine says that every “truth received prepares for the unfolding of more truth, and each brings its own liberating power.”¹¹ Mayfield adds “Truth which gives birth to freedom is *living and personal*, and cannot be other than truth incarnate, the Son.”¹² Thus the New Testament not only demonstrates truth as propositionally relevant to our reality around us, but shows the importance of the experience of truth for the individual that participates in it. Paul makes this clear in 1 Thessalonians 2:13: “For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe” (NKJV). The key phrase is “effectively works.” The Greek word ἐνεργέω (*energō*) means “actively” or “works within,” but is most notable as the Greek word for “energy.” It is an active force within a person. It is something that *moves* a person. As with the Old Testament connecting truth to the heart, the New Testament connects it to the inward active work on the will.

7 See J.H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1930) p. 370.

8 Michel Henry, *I am the Truth: Toward a Philosophy of Christianity* translated by Susan Emanuel (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003) p. 12.

9 Henry, *I am Truth*, p. 17.

10 See Frank E. Gaebelein, editor, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 9: John, Acts* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), p. 95; W.E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Commentary on John* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1997) p. 131; James Montgomery Boice, *The Gospel of John: An Expositional Commentary: Five Volumes in One* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985) pp. 548-551.

11 Vine, *Vine's Expository Commentary on John*, p. 131.

12 Joseph Mayfield, *Beacon Bible Commentary, Volume VII: John, Acts* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1965) p. 108; italics mine.

How truth motivates

Motives are affective states in a person's thinking that move that person to action.¹³ Linda Zagzebski, in her great work, *Divine Motivation Theory*, states it well when she says, "Motives are essentially pushing states, not pulling states, and they push the agent to perform a variety of different acts in different circumstances and to adopt a variety of different ends."¹⁴ She demonstrates from her work that motives are enacted in the emotions, and they affect the attitudes to bring on certain character traits in our lives.¹⁵ When a person comes in contact with truth, he asserts a "proposition and is in an intrinsically motivation state."¹⁶

Psychologist Kenneth Pargament, in his article on human motivation, says that people have a yearning for something "sacred" and this is the fundamental reason why their motivation becomes religious in nature.¹⁷ He states that Freud thought people believed in God because it helped to overcome fears about this world, and regulate uncontrollable urges; Durkheim saw it as a way to create community and unite people in common belief; Clifford Geertz asserted the humans were motivated by religion to have meaning and hope in spite of pain and suffering in the world.¹⁸ These secular thinkers, though opposed to Christianity, recognized contributions to believing in Christianity that motivated believers to peace, kindness, oneness, community, and comfort in times of trials. It is obvious that this is what most people *yearn for* in life. Victor Frankl stated it right:

"When the will-to-meaning is not satisfied, it results in 'existential frustration'...While existential frustration per se is not pathological, it can have detrimental effects on mental health, such as inducing feelings of total meaninglessness and inner emptiness. People who experience this existential vacuum by compensating for their frustrated will-to-meaning with a will to power, money, and pleasure. However, these substitutes cannot fill the void because the true meaning of life is self-transcendent, and ultimate meaning in life requires a search for ultimate truth."¹⁹

13 Linda Trinkaus Zagzebski, *Divine Motivation Theory* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004) pg. 73.

14 *ibid*, p. 23.

15 *ibid*, p. 71.

16 *ibid*, p. 75.

17 Kenneth I. Pargament, "Spirituality as an Irreducible Human Motivation and Process" *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 23 (2013). p. 272.

18 Pargament, p. 272.

19 Quoted in Sung Joon Jang, "Existential Spirituality, Religiosity, and Symptoms of Anxiety-Related Disorders: A Study of Belief in Ultimate Truth and Meaning in Life." *Journal Of Psychology & Theology* 44, no. 3 (September 2016): p. 214.

Frankl, who suffered in Germany during Hitler's reign of terror, understood the anchor of good character in a person's life was ultimate truth found in the divine realm. In commenting on Frankl's words, the writer Sung Joon Jang aptly writes, "Religion offers a system of ultimate truth or a 'living narrative' that helps contextualize people's actions and experiences."²⁰

Jesus said to the disciples, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me." (John 14:1 NIV). This is the beginning of the conversation that would lead Jesus to state that He is the "way, the truth, and the life." Life is full of troubles and people want to know if there is a "way" out of it. Jesus then offers the "truth," truth that "sets free," and truth that will "change" a person. In John 17:17 Jesus states "sanctify them with your truth, your word is true" (NIV). The cleansing of the mind happens when truth affects it. Paul states, "Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by a renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2 NKJV). Transformation *cannot* happen if a person has no motivation for it to take place. But truth does this to a person when he accepts it. This truth leads to "life," or ζωή (*zoe*) which is seen not simply as being alive, but *feeling* alive, having "fullness" of life and being.²¹ Jesus makes this analogy in his teaching on the good Shephard and the sheep, as he states: "I have come that they might have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10 NIV). This is a process of living out a new motivational structure from within a person.

A person who has truly come to the knowledge of truth is "changed" by that truth, and has new motivations to "push" their desires toward the good. An example of this is seen in the epistle written to Titus. Here, Paul urges Titus to "teach what is appropriate to *sound* doctrine" (Titus 2:1 NIV). The word for "sound," ὑγιαίνω (*hugiano*), means primarily to be "healthy," "whole" or to be full in the knowledge of the truth that one has a stable, good character. This is evident in what follows, as Titus says:

"Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love, and in endurance. Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they

²⁰ Jang, p. 215.

²¹ Vine, *Vine's Expository Commentary on John*, p. 132.

can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God. Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.” (Titus 2:2-8 NIV).

Notice how “soundness” in teaching, or basically, teaching *truth*, causes very virtuous qualities that cannot be maligned or condemned, and cause those to “have nothing bad to say about us.” This is because truth is completely “sound” in Jesus, as he came to testify to the truth, and that everyone “on the side of truth” listens to him (John 18:37 NIV). Note, “listens to him,” showing the need for the faith element which enacts truth’s motivational force. James K.A. Smith states that “God’s provision of objective light (revelation) does not resolve the problem of subjective darkness..In other words, the objective provision of revelation in the Scriptures is ineffectual as revelation (i.e., to communicate) without the regeneration of the heart and mind in order to dispel blindness.”²² Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit making the truth come alive in the believer (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13-15), and the motivation that became most evident in the human incarnation of truth, Jesus, will now reside in each of our hearts, allowing our emotions to correspond and drive us to action.

Conclusion

Søren Kierkegaard made a search for “truth that is true for him,” or truth worth believing in. He found this truth in Jesus, because Jesus was the ultimate revelation of God’s truth to this world. What is true “for us” comes alive in living power which changes us and makes us new. Truth is objective, but also works within us subjectively to motivate us to action for him.

²² Smith, *Who's afraid of Postmodernism*, p. 48.

Introduction to Canonical Context as Interpretive Theological Framework For Preaching and Interpreting The Psalms

By Major Pat Irvine

THE PSALMS HAVE ENJOYED A SPECIAL PLACE in the life of the church. The Psalms have taught believers to voice inner emotions often difficult to express. They have been nourished and spiritually refreshed as they have read, sung, chanted, and prayed these treasured portions of Scripture. They stand unique among the Canon of Scripture as the words of the human heart to God, and yet they also convey his heart to those willing to hear him. Luther rightly declared, “The Psalter is the book of all saints; and everyone, in whatever situation he may be, finds in that situation Psalms and words that fit his case, that suit him as if they were put there just for his sake, so that he could not put it better himself, or find or wish for anything better.”²³ While the Psalms have been celebrated and rehearsed in liturgical worship through the centuries, they have not been widely used as texts for proclamation. Perhaps it has been assumed that because they originated as liturgical texts, they should continue to be used that way. However, in recent years interest has begun to focus on the question of the possibility of purposeful editorial shaping in which the poems are viewed not as haphazardly placed single entities, but as contributors to a book with a single, unifying message. Attention is given to understanding the shape of the Psalms as a literary collection and the editorial activity that led to its final form. Interpreting a singular Psalm through the illuminating lens of its canonical context and that of the Canon of Scripture provide the necessary interpretive framework for this book to be both appropriated and proclaimed as the words of God to a chaotic, hurting world.

This essay is intended to briefly survey the interpretive use of canonical context of the Psalms as a robust theological interpretive framework for its

²³ Martin Luther, “Preface to the Psalter,” in *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1960). 35:256.

proclamation. A brief introduction concerning mainstream approaches to Psalms study followed by current studies in canonical interpretation and inter-Psalms relationships will be discussed. Canonical interpretation as theological framework will include a presentation of two essential components; namely, canon as literary structure and canon as illuminating text. Finally, a brief illustration of these two essential components applied to Psalm 11 will serve to demonstrate that the Psalms can be studied, taught, and preached as God's sacred instruction for each new generation of the faithful.

Mainstream approaches to Psalm study

In the last hundred years, Psalm scholarship has focused primarily on attention to the isolation and comparison of psalm-types and on related cultic-historical identification of each "type." Scholars with primary study in this effort were Hermann Gunkel and Sigmund Mowinckel. Gunkel and then Mowinckel identified and described the basic literary types and the setting in life in which these functioned, including the literary and cultural context of ancient Near Eastern civilizations. With respect to types, Gunkel identified five principal types ([i] Hymn; [ii] Communal Lament; [iii] Royal Psalms; [iv] Individual Lament; [v] Individual Thanksgiving).²⁴ Much of his "typing" can be found in many Old Testament commentaries. This study contributed a wealth of valuable information for exegetical and hermeneutic endeavors to this day. The challenge for proclamation of any Psalm, however, is in bringing theological relevancy to the forefront for future generations. Many Psalms "typed" as lament or imprecation are typically ignored for the liturgical setting, much less the pulpit. Yet all humans will face sadness or anger in a lifetime. The proclaimer is charged with preaching the whole counsel of God to the listeners yet wonders how they are to find God's message to the hurting in the words they are charged to proclaim. Current studies in biblical scholarship have demonstrated sufficient evidence of purposeful editorial activity within the book of the Psalms evidenced by a literary macrostructure throughout. This "broader" shaping, which will be referred to in this discussion as "canonical," provide the exegete with strong interpretive clues which serve to bring meaning to single entities by the theological illumination of the whole book in its final form.²⁵

24 See especially Peter Craigie, *Word Biblical Commentary Vol 19 Psalms 1-50*. (Waco: Word Incorporated, 1983). Pgs. 43-48.

25 Scholars interested in canonical shaping of the Psalter generally agree on late dating for the final form of the Psalms. While this will not be discussed in depth for the purposes of this paper, see Gerald H. Wilson, "A First Century C.E. Date for the Closing of the Book of Psalms?" *JBQ* 28 (Jerusalem: Jewish Bible Association, 2000). Pgs 102-110.

Current studies in the Psalms

In regard to organizational structure throughout the book, most commentaries will contain brief introductory material related to isolated groupings of poems, identified by author or setting. For instance, a well-known collection is the Psalms of Ascent grouping which is identified by superscription as such (Ps.120-134). Commentaries also discuss the five book organization which reflects the Pentateuch, but there is much more that can be said concerning the larger shaping of the book which goes beyond an isolated grouping to the book as a canonical whole. The groundbreaking form-critical study of Mowinckel and Gunkel along with the contribution of canonical criticism in the 21st century has paved the way for the study of the Psalms holistically, that is, a book with a single, unifying message.

In interpreting the Old Testament, the interpreter must develop a grasp of Old Testament canon and canonical interpretation. Canon is the term used for the authoritative books from Genesis to Malachi. This term, however, may imply that the order is rather an arbitrary list of books that were simply agreed upon and compiled together in the second century B.C. In fact, the canon of the Old Testament is far more than a mere list of books but a body of texts that illuminate and influence each other so that one book should shape the way we read the other books. For example, the Law texts found in Deuteronomy 16-18 concerning leadership should set the stage for the leadership of the nation of Israel in Joshua-Kings. The author of Chronicles was guided by the book of Kings, building upon its theological message while contributing theological value of its own to the Chronicles. The reader must interpret the Old Testament in light of the canon of the Old Testament. The manner of canonical interpretation invites the reader to living text that views and assesses the gradual development and movement of its theology from beginning to end. This method looks beyond “bits and pieces” to see how isolated entities work together to produce theological texture throughout the canonical book of the Psalms. The ensuing discussion will move from a discussion of scholars who work with larger aspects of editorial shaping and structure to those who examine and compare neighboring psalms through lexical and grammatical analysis.

Brevard Childs has been the most significant proponent of canonical interpretation. Childs argued for a theocentric reading of the book as opposed

to an anthropocentric reading. His canonical interpretation is not so much a method as a different way to read the Psalms. Canonical interpretation takes into account the history of textual formation of the book so that one would not merely read Psalm 1 but discern its theological message in the canonical context of the entire book noting the features in this particular psalm that bind the book together. Canonical interpretation reads the Psalms looking for the reason for the placement and arrangement of each poem within the book.²⁶

Gerald H. Wilson, a student of Childs, examined the Psalms finding evidence of structural clues that suggest a purposeful arrangement that marks the Psalter as a book rather than a collection of hymns. Using his study of ancient Near Eastern hymnal literature, Sumerian temple literature and the Qumran psalms, Wilson analyzed the Psalms using the editorial techniques uncovered in these ancient Near Eastern texts as a control method. Wilson suggested that editorial activity is evident in the limitation of poems to 150, suggesting that others existed which were excluded. He also suggested that Psalm 1 serves as an introductory instruction for the entire Psalter, promoting Torah instruction as the way of life for the people of the King.

Wilson presumes significance in the five-fold division of the book and that editorial activity can be found at the “seams” of the books in the use of kingship psalms in Books I-III. With a preponderance of Davidic authorship in these first three books, Wilson has identified the kingship of David as the primary editorial concern in the first three books. However, in books IV-V, a shift occurs from kingship to wisdom-influenced psalms and Torah which places emphasis on the call to find God again in an exilic environment. Wilson notes a progression, then, in the presentation of kingship and the Davidic covenant. The covenant which YHWH made with David (Psalm 2) and in whose promises David rested secure (Psalm 41) is now passed on to his descendants in this series of petitions in behalf of ‘the king’s son’ (Psalm 72).²⁷ The perspective shifts at Psalm 89 as the covenant is remembered but assumed to have failed, and the psalmist is pleading with YHWH to remember the covenant with David.²⁸ The question posed by Psalm 89:49, “Lord, where is your steadfast love of old, which by your faithfulness you swore to David?” (NRSV) is significant

26 For a summary of Childs’s work see Harry P. Nasuti, “Defining the Sacred Songs: Genre, Tradition and the Post-Critical Interpretation of the Psalms,” *JSOTSUP* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999). Pgs. 164-167.

27 Gerald H. Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*. (Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1985). Pg. 211.

28 *Ibid*, 212-213.

because of its location at the end of Book III. While the psalm ends with a doxology, the question remains unanswered.

Wilson's conclusion is that the overall arrangement of Books I-III poses a question about God's faithfulness to David in the light of the exile, while Book IV provides the answer. The answer is that YHWH is king; He has been our refuge long before the monarchy existed and will continue to be long after the monarchy is gone. This is evidenced resoundingly in Psalm 93-99 with the kingship of YHWH echoed throughout this collection. Wilson compares linguistic evidence in the use of מלך and concludes that the term for "king" ceases to refer to David or other Judahite kings, but now refers to YHWH. Linguistic patterns may not confirm structure in and of themselves but certainly confirm thematic patterns. While mention of David continues to be found in Book IV-V, he is more often referred to as "servant." Wilson highlights the significance of the placement of Psalm 1 and 145 as wisdom compositions which provide the impression that wisdom found in YHWH must reign supreme.

Wilson presents significant implications of editorial shaping: 1) Life is found in delighting in YHWH. Psalm 1 sets the pace as it encourages an attitude of constant delight in and meditation on Torah as the guide to life. The Psalm is tightly structured in chiasm in order that the reader would enjoy its call to diligent study and reflection, not casual acquaintance. 2) In the midst of lament and pain, praise can be found in the human heart for God. Certainly the book encompasses all human emotion and experience. While several lament psalms are found in the first three books, the last half is increasingly dominated by praise of YHWH. The five concluding *hallel* in Psalms 146-150 do not "feel" as if they are ending but rather catapulting the reader onward and upward in praise of YHWH. 3) When faithlessness is felt and there is a lack of will to obey, YHWH provides his steadfast mercy. Movement from individual lament and isolation toward rehearsing God's goodness in community brings renewed identity, restoration, affirmation, and a hope for the future. 4) YHWH inhabits the praises of his people. The central psalms of Book IV (93; 95-99) celebrate the kingship of YHWH, who rules forever. Any failure of Israel cannot be attributed to any weakness of God, but Israel's disobedience. The final *hallel* Psalms (146-150) exhort the people not to trust in anything the world can offer, but the One who is creator, defender, and king of the earth (145:6-9).²⁹

29 Wilson, "The Shape of the Book of Psalms," *Interpretation* 46 (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 1992). Pgs. 129-142.

Jerome Creach views the editorial activity in the psalms similarly, but sees YHWH as refuge. He sees the repetition of YHWH as refuge throughout Book I and concludes that human kingship should be eradicated and dependence on God encouraged. Creach suggests that Psalms 1-89 as a whole may be arranged to reject any notion that any human king could act as Israel's shield and refuge.³⁰ Attention, then, is turned to YHWH who is Israel's true refuge (91:4). Creach has provided a valuable contribution to our understanding of the Psalms. He seeks to apply the concept of canonical interpretation as structure by identifying a fundamental motif that is editorially significant. Creach's contribution provides a semantic field or thematic approach over Wilson's macrostructural approach. Creach assumes a macrostructure and uses his findings in repeated lexemes such as "refuge" to provide comment on the entire organization of the book.

A third approach which illustrates editorial activity worthy of mention is David M. Howard's microstructural work in Psalms 93-100. In this study he examines lexical and key word relationships between these neighboring psalms.³¹ Howard notes that treatment of a limited corpus is only a first step; the next is to examine the corpus in light of Book IV in its entirety. The method in this microstructural examination focuses primarily on key-word links and thematic word links which would illuminate general connections to avoid making too much of relationships that are merely coincidental. For example, he notes a contrasting key word link in the use of *מָוַם*, "to waver, stagger," negated by *אֲלֵ*, refers to the stable condition of the world that YHWH has established, whereas in Psalm 94:18 it refers to the unstable condition of a human foot. Howard's microstructural approach is useful to the interpreter when the placement of a particular psalm among its neighbors may at first glance seem out of place. Comparing lexemes in the search for repeated key words may prove quite fruitful.

Canon as illuminating text

The aforementioned studies are only a small sampling of scholarly work in the area of canonical structure. They serve for the purpose of this discussion to illustrate the possibilities that exist for the interpreter. The next essential concern for the interpreter is that of canon as illuminating text. Wilson's

30 Jerome Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge*. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996). Pg. 17.

31 D.M. Howard, *The Scruture of the Psalms 93-100*. (Warsaw, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1996). Pg. 231.

groundbreaking work demonstrated that the final editors of the Hebrew Psalter intended to produce a structure that went beyond the individual poem. Howard's work points to relationship between neighboring psalms in keyword linking, while Creach's analysis of thematic motif links psalms conceptually. All three of these scholars share the primary goal of assembling evidence of editorial shaping; anything that illumines the text is useful for interpreters. Evidence of editorial shaping indicates an ancient interpretation of the psalms that places them together for theological reasons, not just because they share the same genre, or "type."

The second essential element for the interpreter is that of canon as illuminating text. For those proclaiming the psalms this means that the entire psalter can help interpreters understand the theology of an individual psalm. It is the individual psalm that will be wrestled through in preparation for preaching. Canon as illuminating text aids the interpreter in stepping out of the psalm under study to search for similar literary conventions, theological themes, key words, repeated imagery, and their placement in the macrostructural picture. This is the method used in all other books of the Bible; it provides context for the task at hand.

Psalm 11 as illustration of canonical interpretation

The final section of this discussion provides a summary interpretive presentation of canonical interpretation at work in preparation for preaching Psalm 11. The Psalm is versed in two strophes; the first in verses 1-3 describing a tone of despair. The poet is in crisis, there is imminent danger from enemies, and he reflects on his situation and possible responses. On this occasion, the crisis has brought with it temptation; should he flee from it or face it? He ponders this even after stating the Lord is his refuge (Ps 11:1 NASB). The temptation may have come from a friend, "How can you say to my soul, "Flee as a bird to your mountain;" (11:1b). The enemy is prepared with weapons ready, even so as not to be seen (11:3). All seems lost as the final despairing question of the strophe is asked, "If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (11:3).

The second strophe (11:4-7) is a strophe which describes a restoration of the poet's confidence. It describes God on his throne in his transcendence, but also in his immanence, for he is present in his holy temple among his people. It is the power of God high above all and his nearness in the testing oftentimes that

restores this poet's confidence, enabling him to look up, stand firm, and trust in the goodness and faithfulness of God.

The canonical interpretation of the Psalms views Book IV (90-106) as the editorial center of the book.³² The collection is dominated by enthronement psalms, all of which address God as king or affirm that God reigns (93:1; 95:3; 96:10; 97:1; 98:6; 99:1). Thus, the central affirmation of the book is that God reigns, he rules the world. This is understood both as a present reality and future reality yet to be consummated. The present age exists in the not yet; the future reality of the coming of the King is not just yet. We live in Psalm 11, when the foundations of the world are topsy-turvy, morality is gone, world systems are clashing, and the righteous wonder how they are to continue to live. The Psalm reminds us to look up, to be assured that God, as King, reigns. Crisis will be a time of testing (11:5) and what the righteous must retain in all things is their confidence in the living God. The righteous remain confident as they meditate day and night on the Law (Torah) of God (Ps. 1). The righteous too can have the assurance that God is King, evidenced in the *hallel* at the glorious conclusion to the book (146-150). There is reason to praise him. Our Lord reigns! Hallelujah!

Conclusion

This discussion has served to provide a brief introduction to current studies in Psalms research and their usefulness in proclaiming the Psalms. Interpretation that considers the context of an individual psalm and allows the canon of the Psalter to illuminate its theology will find and discover truths that bear witness to the greatness and majesty of God. Within the church context this has immense pastoral value in providing a way for those who hear the Word to validate their own experience in light of the rich theology of the Psalms.

32 Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*. Pg. 215.

An Updated Translation of 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and its Relationship to Doctrine 10 in The Salvation Army

By David Witthoff

*And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God
your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless
unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

-KJV

*Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely;
and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless
at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

-NKJV

THE TRANSLATION OF 1 THESSALONIANS 5:23 has historically been mistranslated, and this mistranslation was incidentally incorporated into Salvation Army doctrine. The Scripture above shows the contrast from the KJV and the updated NKJV. The obvious difference is the preposition “unto” in the KJV, and “at” in the NKJV. In this work, I want to examine the grammar of the passage and show why the translation of “unto” or “until” is incorrect, and why “at” is the proper understanding of the Greek text.

This is a critical preposition in the passage. If the translation is “unto” or “until,” this verse would seem to support the possibility of a blameless life before death and glorification. If the translation is better with “at,” this verse would support blamelessness at glorification.³³ I will refer to the “unto” and “until” translation as the Present Perspective since it supports present ramifications. The “at” translation I will refer to as the Future Perspective since it supports events that would occur in the future.

First, a review of a few translations is appropriate. For the preposition in

³³ Technically, at the *parousia*, that is, the second coming of Christ. But theologically this should be understood as either God’s presence or Christ’s return, whichever a person experiences first.

question, the KJV contains “unto;” the NLT, “until.” Of the major translations, these are the only support for the Present Perspective. The NASB, ESV, NRSV, NKJV, NIV (and TNIV), and NCV all support the Future Perspective with “at” and “when.”³⁴ The KJV and NLT are certainly in the minority among the translations. The NLT in particular, while a good translation, is periphrastic, and this may account for the difference in translation.

Turning now to the Greek text, we find:

Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης ἀγιάσαι ὑμᾶς ὀλοτελεῖς, καὶ ὀλόκληρον ὑμῶν τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ τὸ σῶμα ἀμέμπτως ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ τηρηθεῖη.³⁵

The phrase in question is ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ. The third word, παρουσία, is a reference to the “coming” of Jesus. It is a noun in the dative case. The preposition ἐν is the word that the perspectives differ on. There are a number of translation options that BDAG offers.³⁶ They say of the preposition ἐν:

“The uses of this prep. are so many and various, and oft. so easily confused, that a strictly systematic treatment is impossible. It must suffice to list the main categories, which will help establish the usage in individual cases.”

Of the numerous categories listed, *none* contain the gloss or meaning of “until” or “unto,” the translations that support the Present Perspective. Supporting the Future Perspective, BDAG offers “when” as a possible translation. Within this category, he gives three different senses: Two of these are used to describe a point in time, and all three are used to temporally link a verb and a dative noun. If we classified the ἐν of 1 Thessalonians 5:23 by this category (and I believe this is the only option), the second main verb of the sentence (τηρηθεῖη) could not be seen as antecedent to the dative noun (τῇ παρουσίᾳ) that this preposition links. So, the English preposition which we

34 The NCV has “when the Lord Jesus Christ returns,” which supports the future, though without the preposition “at.”

35 B. Aland, K. Aland, M. Black, C. M. Martini, B. M. Metzger, & A. Wikgren *The Greek New Testament* 4th ed. (Germany: United Bible Societies, 1993) 537. All Greek references in this work will come from this edition of the GNT.

36 W. Arndt, F. W. Danker, & W. Bauer *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature* 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2000) Pg. 326.

choose should not bring the temporal sense of the verb before the dative noun.

A simple analogy in English can explain this. In the sentence “John caught the ball before the runner made it to home base,” the main verb is “caught.” The preposition “before” gives more description, specifically about time. It tells us that the ball was caught *before* something else happened. This other thing is the runner making it to home base. We could also say “John caught the ball *at the moment* the runner made it to home base.” This is almost the same, but the preposition “at” in this case brings the temporal sense forward, to the moment described in the phrase that follows. In our passage, ἐν is a similar preposition, and it appears that there is no support for translating this preposition in a way that makes the second verb of the verse (preserving/keeping) occur before the dative noun that follows the preposition. This dative noun translates as the coming of Jesus.

A perusal of a few grammars gives further evidence. In Mounce’s grammar, though his discussion of prepositions is very short, his diagram is helpful.³⁷ The place of ἐν within his diagram shows how it reveals a *moment* in time or a *point* in space. Other prepositions in the diagram correspond to *towards, from, through, out of, into, under, and aside*. The place of ἐν does not reference a progression. The preposition is often used spatially, like English *in*, but even in a spatial sense, it only marks one point. In a temporal sense, ἐν also marks one point: the point of reference of the noun that follows it. So not only does it link verbs to the same time as the noun that follows them, it cannot be used to indicate a progression of time. So a translation of “unto” or “until” is out of the question since it gives an indeterminate amount of time *until* something else happens. In addition, if we were “preserved blameless” *until* the coming of Jesus, it would possibly imply that that preserving would *cease* at that point, since the action would only occur *until* the point of reference.

In Wallace’s grammar, he shows a similar diagram, though he elaborates and comments on each preposition.³⁸ For ἐν he lists ten different usages: Spatial/Sphere, Temporal, Association, Cause, Instrumental, Reference/Respect, Manner, Thing Possessed, Standard (=Dative of Rule), and As an Equivalent for εἰς. All of these usages cannot apply to the same verse, and usually only one usage makes sense in a given context. Under the Temporal category, Wallace glosses ἐν as “*in, within, when, while, and during*.” Each of these glosses reveals

³⁷ William D. Mounce *Basics of Biblical Greek*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan. 2003). Pg. 60

³⁸ Daniel B. Wallace *The Basics of New Testament Syntax An Intermediate Greek Grammar*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan. 2000). Pgs. 162; 167.

the sense of ἐν as happening at the point of reference, or during the point of reference, but not before it. While Wallace may offer some possibility for a progressive or durative sense, his analysis only gives evidence for translating 1 Thessalonians 5:23 as “*at the coming.*”

Commentators are somewhat unclear on this issue. They do not elaborate on this preposition much. The author Best writes in his commentary for the Future Perspective, though he gives an ambiguous caveat.³⁹ Thomas gives no comment on the preposition itself, though he does translate according to the Future Perspective.⁴⁰ In Bruce’s commentary it is interesting that he sees the construction of 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and 1 Thessalonians 3:13 (which contains a similar phrase) as being compendious. Thus, they both refer to the time until the Parousia and at the Parousia. However, the sanctification and keeping of 5:23 Bruce does not see as being *completed* before the Parousia. He says, “In both places the construction is compendious; the writer’s prayer is that their converts may be preserved entirely without fault *until* the Parousia and be so found *at* the Parousia, when they will be perfected in holiness.” While Bruce does understand some antecedent reference, he does not consider holiness to be perfected until the coming of Christ (and this is further complicated by how one could be faultless before the Parousia and then be perfected at the Parousia!).⁴¹

While this is just a survey of the scholarly support, these authors are not significantly helpful in interpretation, though they seem to loosely support the Future Perspective based on translations. Bruce, as noted, has some ambiguity. The commentary material tends to focus on the nature of the “body, soul, spirit” language of the passage, and not on the preposition.

Conclusion

The support for the Future Perspective appears to be the most coherent. This is based on:

1. Lexical evidence of the usage of ἐν as provided by Bauer.
2. Grammatical/Syntactical analysis of ἐν from Wallace’s and Mounce’s diagrams.
3. The support of the majority of English translations.

39 Ernest Best *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* in Black’s New Testament Commentary. (London: A & C Black Limited. 1972). Pgs. 242-244.

40 Robert L. Thomas in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*. Vol. 11. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan. 1981). Pgs. 293-294.

41 F.F. Bruce in *Word Biblical Commentary*. Vol. 45. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson. 1982). Pgs. 128-131.

Turning to Salvation Army doctrine, we find in Doctrine 10:

“We believe that it is the privilege of all believers to be wholly sanctified, and that their whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”⁴²

In *The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine*, the citation of 1 Thessalonians 5:23 is taken from the KJV. It seems obvious that using another English translation to discuss this doctrine was not chosen here since the translation of the key preposition in most other versions would clash with the reading of Doctrine 10.

A distinction should be made at this point. The Salvation Army has historically been a Holiness church, emphasizing the holy life and entire sanctification in this present life. This work does not speculate or present an alternative suggestion for Salvation Army Holiness Theology—it is not Holiness Theology itself being reviewed here. Only the translation of 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and its incorporation into Doctrine 10 is in view here. Salvation Army Holiness Theology does not depend on this single verse with a particular reading.

In summary, when The Salvation Army was founded and the doctrines formed, the wording of 1 Thessalonians 5:23 in the KJV became the wording of Doctrine 10 because of the prevalence of that translation in that time and that verse’s association with Holiness Theology. However, based on the grammatical and syntactical evidence, 1 Thessalonians 5:23 should not be read as Paul’s wish for a Christian to be preserved blameless “unto” the coming of Christ, but rather “at” His coming in the future. The suggestion of this work is that Doctrine 10 should be updated since it relies so heavily on the mistranslated wording of 1 Thessalonians 5:23 of the KJV. A reformulated version of the doctrine could then be presented and affirmed as a replacement for the current wording.

42 *The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine*. (London: Salvation Books, 2010). Pg. 191.